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THE

Shakespearian Drama

A COMMENTARY

BY

DENTON J. SNIDER

THE COMEDIES.

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INTRODUCTION.

Fifteen plays of Shakespeare may be properly classified as comedies. What is the thought common to them all and linking them together under a single name? Undoubtedly a mediatorial principle now enters the Shakespearian world in distinction from the principle of Tragedy. But under both Tragedy and Comedy lies the Deed, which is the first thing to be considered.

Shakespeare stands nearer to the human Deed than any other recorded mortal. This is the prime fact concerning him; he, the man of imaginative vision looking upon the busy world, sees action more clearly than the mightiest man of action; thus he is supremely the poet of the Deed, the dramatic poet. The drama is his inherent form of thought and expression; he beholds all truth in this way, and so he writes in this way. Not the philosophic form is ultimate with him, though he has the deepest philosophy; not the moral, though his whole work rests upon the ethical order of the world; his vision is the Deed in the form of the Deed.

Yet not every Deed the Poet takes; many must be thrown away in the sweep and hurry of the action. The essence of a long, rich and varied career he must compress into his dramatic limits and leave out nothing of worth. Often he has to concentrate a life into a few minutes, and yet cast a true and vivid image of the whole life. In his hands a character which has unfolded and expanded through years, shrinks to a spirit-picture, upon which we look and see all. Take Lear: his development is that of a long period which, in the drama, we live through in an hour. The grand excellence of the poet is this ability to select the pivotal Deed of a character and make it turn upon that — a Deed which shows to the bottom the spiritual nature of the man. Other writers may give us action and be full of movement and variety; but the question is, What kind of action do they give us? To seize upon and portray the essential soul-revealing Deed is Shakespeare's supreme dramatic instinct. Yet not the Deed of a single character merely; the poet at the same time grasps and unfolds in his characters the central fact of a society, of an age.

The Shakespearian world, accordingly, when it incorporates itself in Art, becomes, through its own deepest necessity, dramatic. That is, it seizes the soul just when it utters itself in performance; the Drama shows man in action; it portrays this act of the individual, not in marble,

color, sound, or by means of description, but in the immediate form of the act itself, voiced, to be sure, by human speech. The Drama is the Deed imaged by the Deed as its adequate artistic embodiment. It is probably for this reason that Shakespeare is the most acceptable of all literary books to the active man, especially to the practical Anglo-Saxon; in it he beholds the clearest reflection of his daily life, which is continued action, he sees all that he does, with its hidden springs in the human heart, revealed in the very form of doing.

The Drama, moreover, unfolds what is contained in the Deed, the total cycle of it, in all its consequences, showing the world built by the individual day by day, built of his conduct, the world which he must live in. This is the lasting value of Shakespeare, no writer has so completely portrayed man in the eternal presence of his Deed. It is, in fact, his very soul-form, this dramatic form, whose depths he has sounded more adequately than any other poet. Everywhere in Shakespeare one may find the substrate of freedom and responsibility; man makes his own world and must dwell in it, be it Heaven or Hell. Deed after Deed he piles up like so many stones in the temple of life; he cannot escape from his Deed which is the outer living reality of himself, his own personality made into his spiritual dwelling-place. He must live in his own

world, not in that of anybody else; if he perishes in it or through it, his death is his own act, or the fruit thereof. In tragic seriousness, in comic sportfulness there is the same fundamental trait of Shakespeare: man summoned to the presence of his Deed and judged by it, with reward, punishment, or forgiveness. Here and now the individual is held up to his act, and not in the future; the Last Judgment is every day and not the last day; the Judge is always sitting, and voices the everlasting law, which is the law of the Deed. Shakespeare, therefore, asserts supremely the freedom of man, giving to him his own world, which he makes by his Deed.

And now having seen one side of Shakespeare's work — that of individual character in its freedom acting the Deed — we must turn to the other side, the side that reveals the pre-established necessary realm in which his personages are forever moving. Already it has been declared that man must live in the world which he constructs by his conduct. But this statement does not mean that there is no universal order over him, that there is nothing but individual will in the universe. On the contrary, there is always in the Poet an universal order, and just this is its nature — to permit man to have his own Deed, nay, to bring it back to him, in case of necessity. Such is the supreme system in which man lives and acts; freedom he has, yet he also dwells in a

world-order which gives, yea, compels his freedom. This is the ethical or institutional environment in which the individual is placed, but which he must create too; by his Deed he makes it, yet it is everlastingly made just as well.

A most important element in Shakespeare is this Ethical World, the realm of institutions. It is the eternal foundation upon which his dramas rest, the divine order in which they move. We see not one character merely, but a whole society, of which the characters are but atoms; this society has its own life and law, it has an order, it is a world. The outcome of a Shakespearian play is not simply that somebody perish or be saved, but it shows also a sense of Providence, a revelation out of the bosom of the Infinite. When terrestrial institutions fail, or become corrupted by guilt, as is the case sometimes, then we behold another institution above them all, appearing from the celestial spaces as it were, and ordering anew the perverted man and his disarranged economy. This supreme institution is continually manifesting itself in Shakespeare; in fact the conflict between lower secular institutions is always driving them forward into the presence of the highest institutional arbiter.

The elements of the Shakespearian world-order may be reduced to two: Justice and Love. Justice holds man to accountability, brings home to him his act, whereby he may perish and thus be-

come tragic. But in truth, Justice seeks, by its discipline, to free man of error and guilt, seeks to make him transcend his limitation, which holds him in wrong and ignorance, and to have him rise to his true being. Then Love appears in the divine order and accepts him, when he has freed himself of his weakness and sin; nay, it extends to him an ever-present hand and helps lift him out of his crushing limitations. Even beneath Justice there is Love, for Justice is remedial in its essence, and punishes the weak and wicked deed in order to rid the man of it forever.

Not without deep insight does Ulrici say that Shakespeare's Comedies are based upon divine Love, while the Tragedies reveal divine Justice. Still we must not forget that in Comedy, too, there is Justice, the foolish or guilty man has his folly or guilt served up to him in strict measure; but this Justice destroys the weak or bad act in the man, and not the man himself, thus freeing him and not undoing him. The comic character is, accordingly, not allowed to perish, but is rescued from guilt, from folly and even from the external complications of Chance.

In Shakespeare, as already noted, there are some fifteen plays which we class under the head of Comedies. Among them exists much diversity in color, style, depth of thought and completeness of treatment. Also they were written at very different periods of the Poet's life. Still they have

a common principle as distinct from the Tragedies, and this principle we must find and express. Were we asked to give one word in which may be centered the unity, and out of which may be unfolded the variety, of Shakespeare's Comedies, that word would be Mediation. They are all mediated in one way or another, and they may be, taken together, called the Mediated Drama of Shakespeare.

Through this word we pass out of Tragedy into Comedy. The connecting link between the two we can find in a number of places in the Poet's works. The thought of mediation for the guilty act through repentance occurs often in Shakespeare's Tragedies, there is a point at which the tragic character, in its career of guilt, is brought face to face with a change of life; if the man repent he will be saved, if he persist he must perish. Let us take the play of *Hamlet* where the king says:

> Try what Repentance can; what can it not?
> Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?

The king is seeking to get rid of the guilt of murder; if he repent, he will not be tragic; but he does not repent, and so he perishes. In like manner, the Queen has repentance held up before her conscience by her son, but she follows it not, and must die in consequence. So, too, Hamlet himself will not follow either conscience or revenge. In fact if these three characters had re-

pented, the play would not have been a tragedy, but a mediated drama. Compare the case of Leontes in *Winter's Tale*. He quite reaches the extreme limit of ethical violation, but he repents at the critical moment, when the last warning has been given, and thus he is saved. At this point we see Tragedy passing over into Comedy in Shakespeare.

I. TRANSITION FROM TRAGEDY TO COMEDY. — We are now to move out of the gloom of Shakespeare's Tragic World, and to enter a new sphere which shows man not destroyed, but redeemed. Still he is seen to have weakness, error, guilt; but at the same time he is seen to be in the process of purification. Comedy in its essence is purgatorial; it portrays the individual in his finitude, but also portrays him overcoming it; the comic person in Shakespeare has an infinite nature lurking in his finite one, whereby he transcends his limit and is enabled to see his folly, sin, and ignorance, and often to get rid of them through his comic discipline.

It has been already pointed out in the previous volume that the peculiarity of the tragic character is the intensity with which it seizes and carries out its purpose — an intensity overcome only by death. But is there no reconciliation? Must the conflict of principles, and, indeed, of valid principles, end in destruction to man? Must that upon which his rational existence reposes over-

whelm him in ruin? Such questions have all one object — a Mediation which saves the individual, they are the earnest inquiries of the soul after a plan of salvation. In one sense even Tragedy ends in reconciliation, it brings back harmony to the Ethical World after some great disturbance, but it is a harmony through death. This solution, therefore, is negative, nay, self-destructive; the object of the Ethical World must be to save man, else it must itself perish. Can there not be, then, a reconciliation which will preserve the individual? Yes, there must be, is the answer of the modern world and of Shakespeare, the answer also of Christianity through its Divine Mediator.

It is at this point that we see Shakespeare and the Christian doctrine to be one in meaning though different in expression. Both are seeking to utter the great fact of Mediation through repentance unto men, the one in a religious, the other in a secular way. This Mediation carried out in dramatic form Shakespeare undoubtedly called a Comedy. So Dante called his great Christian poem a Comedy, though he gave another reason for so doing. Dante's poem, too, shows Mediation in the supreme religious sense, it unfolds the struggle and happy outcome of the Christian world. But in Shakespeare the religious form is concealed by the throbbing vigorous life of the secular world, which, however, belongs to Christendom.

In Comedy, therefore, we are first brought to consider that character, which, being involved in a possible tragic collision, is saved before the final stroke of destruction. He has already fallen into guilt, or, at least, into a conflict with some ethical principle, though he may have grounds of justification for his act. It has been noticed that the tragic conflict may be double — both internal and external; in like manner the Mediation of such a conflict has to be double. In the first place, the character must yield, the man must surrender his attitude of obstinate hostility. Stricken with the guilt of his conduct he must repent; that is, he must make his deed undone as far as lies in his power. Repentance is, accordingly, the great internal process of Mediation; when the individual fully sees what he has assailed, he sinks into deep contrition; this sorrow of the soul is what prepares him for a reconciliation with the Ethical World. The internal penitence being complete, we next behold the external instrumentalities of Mediation, which in Shakespeare, are of great variety; note, for instance, the last act of *Winter's Tale* and of *Cymbeline*. Suffice it to say that the repentant character is restored to all that he had lost through guilt. Chiefly, however, he is placed once more in outward harmony, as well as inward, with institutions, or with the whole Ethical World, which is thus without strife, and the individual

in it is saved. Such is the positive end of the Mediated Drama, which, in its supreme manifestation, touches the highest point of Dramatic Art, in fact, quite reaches beyond the limits of the Drama itself. Particularly in *Tempest* Shakespeare has written a play which bursts the old theatrical bounds, and sweeps upward into a new artistic world.

Here it is well to mark the Shakespearian use of the word "comic," which has lost in these days, its deeper meaning, and is applied to something that is merely funny. Mediation which frees the man of guilt, is not a laughable process, though it is comic in Shakespeare. It has, indeed, a tragic seriousness and is by no means provocative of mirth, either in the spectator or in the one undergoing it; still the end of the conflict is not death, the outcome is happy, the struggle is mediated, and this it is which makes the drama and the character comic, though both be serious or even somber in color.

A second and lighter phase of the Comic in Shakespeare is seen when the individual commits no act of guilt, but shows some caprice, foible, oddity, which is absurd and self-annulling. The course of the comedy then is to bring home to the man his folly, that he may recognize it and get rid of it. He is to be trained into his higher rational nature by the discipline of his foolish narrow deed. At this point also the Ethical

World peers through, into which he is received, when the obstacle is removed, which obstacle is his folly. So this second less profound phase of Comedy ends in reconciliation between the individual and the institutional or rational order above him.

The third and still more superficial phase of the Comic shows man as the sport of external accident. He is now the victim of Chance, being given over to false appearances, disguises, deceptions of the senses. His free will is scarcely involved; still he shows a limit, and that limit is his ignorance of the sensible world about him, the essence of which he does not see, but only the appearance. Here, too, then, he must be put under training; he must learn not to trust his senses too far, but to find what is under what seems, and thus to transcend his limit of ignorance. When he has taken his discipline, again the ethical order appears above him, and with it he is placed in harmony.

Thus, all three phases show the purgatorial training of man to a supreme world-order, with which at last he must come into reconciliation.

The Mediated Drama, accordingly, has a happy termination, and herein stands in direct contrast to Tragedy. It, therefore, constitutes a special division, which is, in Shakespeare, named Comedy — which word is used in two, nay, three different significations. It may mean the serious,

even sombre play — which, however, avoids the tragic end; or, on the other hand, it may mean the light, sportive play, resting entirely on subjective caprices, foibles, and oddities; or finally the play of Accident. Yet all these kinds belong to the Mediated Drama, and, hence, must ultimately be classed together. All three kinds also employ quite the same species of instrumentalities for their mediation, as Natural Resemblance, Disguise, Mistaken Identity in its various forms — the nature of which will be discussed hereafter. Comedy, however, since it is a relaxation from tragic severity, has always a tendency to descend till it reaches the laugh; it gravitates, naturally, to the humorous or ridiculous phase of persons and things. From this side chiefly it has, therefore, to be considered.

II. Thought and Structure of Comedy.— The Tragic and the Comic fade into each other by almost insensible gradations, and the greatest beauty of a poetical work often consists in the harmonious blending of these two elements. Not only in the same drama may both exist in perfect unison, but even in the same character. Great actors generally have a similar quality, and frequently it is hard to tell whether their impersonations be more humorous or more pathetic. This happy transfusion and interchange of tragic and comic coloring is one of the characteristics of supreme Art; it brings the relief along with the

pain; it furnishes the reconciliation along with the conflict. Shakespeare seems to have taken a special delight in its employment. No principle of his procedure is better known or more fully appreciated. His tragedies never fail of having their comic interludes; his comedies have, in nearly every case, a serious thread, and sometimes a background with a tragic outlook. Life is not all gloom or all delight; the cloud will obscure the sun, but the sun will illumine the cloud — at least around the edges.

Still, the Comic is not the Tragic, however subtle may be their intertwining, and however rapid their interaction. They rest upon diverse, and in some respects opposite, principles. Criticism must seek to explain the difference between them for the understanding, and must not rest content with a vague appeal to the feeling of beauty. Tragic earnestness springs from the deep ethical principle which animates the individual. He, however, assails another ethical principle, and thereby falls into guilt. The tragic character, moreover, must have such strength and intensity of will that it can never surrender its purpose. A reconciliation is impossible; death alone can solve the conflict. In Comedy also there may be a collision with some ethical principle on the part of the individual; he may intend a violation, but not realize his intention; he is foiled through external deception, or

breaks down through internal weakness; to him is wanting that complete absorption in some great purpose which is the peculiar quality of the tragic hero. The common realm of Tragedy and Comedy is the ethical world and its collision. Their essential difference lies in the different relation of the leading characters to this ethical world.

Here we are brought face to face with the first point which must be settled — what constitutes the Comic Individual? But a single person does not make a comedy; it requires several who are in action and counteraction; hence the second part of the subject will be the Comic Action; thirdly, a termination must be made which springs necessarily from the preceding elements; this gives the Comic Solution. Each division will be taken up in its natural order.

1. *The Comic Individual.* — He is, in one form or another, the victim of deception. He fights a shadow of his own mind, or pursues an external appearance; his end is a nullity, his plan an absurdity; he is always deceived; he really is not doing that which he seems to be doing. His object may be a reasonable one, his purpose may be a lofty one, but he is inadequate to its fulfillment; the delusion then, is that he believes in his own ability to accomplish what he wills. His object also may be an absurd one; he pursues it, however, with the same resolution. It may be called

a foible, a folly, a frailty — still the essential characteristic is that the individual is pursuing an appearance, and thus is the victim of deception, though he may be conscious of the absurd and delusive nature of his end. Even sin, in its comic sense, is a delusion, and possibly in every sense; certainly the Devil is the self-deluded being in the Universe, and is also comic.

The two limitations of this sphere are to be carefully noticed. The Comic Individual must not succeed in utterly destroying the ethical principles which he conflicts with; these are the highest, the most serious, interests of man, and cannot even be endangered without exciting an apprehension, which makes against every comic tendency. Successful seduction, adultery, treason — in fine, the violations of State and Family — are not in themselves comic; nor is villainy, which attains its purpose. Such an intention of wrong-doing may exist, but it must never come to complete realization; it must not only be thwarted in the end, but also punished. The delusion, therefore, ought not to go so far as to result in a successful violation of ethical principles. Nor, on the other hand, ought it to transgress the limits of sanity — a madman is not a comic character. Reason must be present in the individual, though his end be absurd. A rational man acting irrationally is the incongruity which calls forth the laugh — is the contradiction upon which

Comedy reposes. There must be, in the end, a restoration from delusion, and often a punishment, both of which are precluded by the notion of insanity. Many readers feel that Don Quixote is too much of a lunatic. In general, therefore, the Comic Individual must not be a persistent criminal, nor must he be a total madman.

We are now to take a glance at the instrumentalities of Comedy — at the means which renders the Individual comic. His deceptions can arise from two sources — from the senses and from the mind. It thus may have an external cause, namely, the situation in which he is placed; or it may have an internal origin, namely, his caprice, his imagination, his understanding. Here we have the two essential kinds of Comedy — that of Situation and that of Character. The former seeks its instrumentalities outside of the individual; he is determined by them externally; hence freedom almost disappears in this form of the drama. But, in Comedy of Character, the Individual is self-determined; his situation, in its essential points, is the consequence of his own action — of his own folly or weakness; he is not plunged into it from without, by fate or by accident. In this sphere the Individual will find a realm of freedom.

In Comedy of Situation, therefore, a person is placed in circumstances over which he has little or no control, and is made to pursue absurd and

nugatory objects without any direct fault of his own. His deception is brought about through the senses; his mistakes arise from false appearances which hover around him — in general, that which is phantom seems reality. He now follows up his delusions as ends; he meets and collides with others who have similar ends, or with others who have rational ends. The result is an infinite complication of mistakes and deceptions, which is the peculiar nature of Comedy of Situation, or, as it is more commonly called from its intricacy, Comedy of Intrigue.

The special forms of this sensuous deception ought also to be classified. In the first place, *things* may be disguised. The natural and artificial objects which ordinarily surround a man may be so changed that he imagines himself a different person, or in a strange world; a sudden transition into a new country, or into a new condition of life, may be made to appear actual, though wholly unreal. Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker, who, being suddenly surrounded by the luxury of a palace, comes to consider himself a lord, is an example. But this phase is quite subsidiary — it is a mere setting for other and greater effects.

The second, and chief instrumentality of Comedy of Situation is the mistake in personality, or, as it is sometimes called, Mistaken Identity. One person is taken for another; thus two per-

sons lose their relations to the society around them, and this society loses its relation to them. The effect is wonderful. The whole world seems to be converted into a dream — into fairy-land; the natural order of things is turned upside down; the customary transactions of life are perverted or destroyed. A man with a strong head, it is true, may preserve his equilibrium in the confusion; such an one, however, is not a comic character. You go upon the street; you are taken for somebody else, and familiarly addressed by persons whom you have never before seen, and about matters of which you have never before heard; presents are given you; payment is demanded of you for unknown articles; you are met by a woman who calls herself your wife, and, when you indignantly repudiate her, the law is invoked; you are dragged before a court of justice, where her claim is successfully established by many witnesses, and, finally, you are in danger of being lynched by an angry populace. The other person for whom you are taken has also corresponding difficulties; his relations in life are thrown into serious confusion; his business is crossed; his dear wife seems to have gone astray; still, the disturbing influence is to him a total mystery. Society, too, is drawn into the same whirl of delusion. Law, Family, State — the highest institutions of man — become the wild sport of accident. Such a condition of things

cannot last long, but, while it does last, there is fun for those who are in the secret. What is the matter? Mistaken Identity, which, however, the parties caught in the complication must not think of, else the spell is broken.

The mistakes of identity are produced mainly in two ways — by Natural Resemblance and by Disguise. The first is an accident, and lies outside of the knowledge of the individuals who happen to be like one another. They are, therefore, the unconscious victims of an external influence; they are involved in a confusion of which nobody knows the origin. But Disguise is intentional — at least on the part of one person, namely, he who has disguised himself. All the other characters of the play may be victimized by the mask, and take the appearance for the reality; or a part of them may be in the secret, and enjoy the sport with the audience. One individual, however, is not deceived — is free; has a conscious purpose of his own, which he is realizing. Disguise has a thousand shapes; it is the most common artifice, not merely of Comedy, but of the Drama generally. It may run through a whole play and constitute the main point of interest, or it may be employed for a subordinate object in a single scene. Its manifold forms show the originality of the writer of Comedy. Here is his province — the creation of novel disguises and situations. They all, how-

ever, have the one common characteristic — deception through a false appearance.

But Disguise has its limits, which will be manifested often beneath the most adroit concealment. The person in mask is usually supposed to be the master of the complications which he weaves around himself, and so he is ordinarily portrayed. But an unsuspected resemblance may come in and disturb his plans. Thus Viola, in *Twelfth Night*, notwithstanding her disguise, is lost in the comic labyrinth by the appearance of her brother, who resembles her, but whom she supposed to be drowned. But the true dissolution of Disguise is manifest when character reveals itself beneath the mask, and the internal nature of man shows itself stronger than any external covering. Then the Disguise becomes nothing — it quite disappears. Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, betrays herself when she faints at the story of the bloody handkerchief; both her sex and her love shine out beneath her doublet and hose. The disguised mother at a masquerade will be apt to manifest some peculiar interest in her daughter, and thus reveal both herself and the daughter. The same may be said of many other relations of life. This has a supreme comic effect; it is the climax of Comedy of Situation, and, at the same time, the transition into a deeper principle. The external Disguise has melted away before the internal Character.

It will thus be seen that Comedy of Situation is logically incomplete, and is inadequate to express the more profound comic elements of human nature. Moreover, it is wanting in freedom. That man should be represented as placed in a world of deception and appearance, which cajoles him and leads him astray without any fault on his part, does not satisfy reason or the highest æsthetic feeling. Mistakes through sensuous delusions may be very laughable, but they lack the supreme comic principle. We all think that a person ought not to be responsible for that which is external and accidental. Such is sometimes the reality, however, though by no means the deepest and truest reality of human existence. Man must be reached by his own act; he must himself be the cause of his own difficulties. Thus he is moved from within, is self-determined, and is to blame for his follies. Anything short of freedom will not completely satisfy us; it conflicts too strongly with our rational nature.

From these observations it will easily be inferred that, in Comedy of Situation, there can be but little portraiture of character. A person may be caught in a train of ludicrous circumstances, be his disposition what it may. A man's hat blows off on a windy day; is followed by his wig; he runs to pick them out of the mud. He is, no doubt, a laughable object to the by-standers, but

such an occurrence is not determined by his character, nor designates it in any way. His behavior under the trying ordeal may reveal certain traits; still, this is not inherent in the situation, but points beyond, namely to the inner nature of the man.

Thus we arrive at the necessity of the second grand division of Comedy, as manifested in the Individual. From its essential principle it will be best named Comedy of Character. Now, the Individual has truly an absurd end; his deed is internal in its origin; it springs from himself, and cannot be laid to his surroundings. His purpose is still a delusive appearance, which, however, is the product of his own brain. He may even be aware of its insubstantial nature, and yet pursue it; or, he may not be aware of that fact. Here rise up at once before us the two leading phases of Comedy of Character — the Involuntary and Voluntary.

In the first of these spheres the Individual loses sight of his true relations to the external world, to other individuals, to society. This delusion is not brought about through any disguise of what is real, but through his own folly or infatuation; it does not result from any external deception, but from self-deception. The objects and persons around him have not been changed; the disguise has now gone into his mind — has become internal, and casts its shadow upon his judgment.

The mistake, therefore, is not of the senses, but rather of the understanding. This phase of comic development is thus seen to be quite different from Comedy of Situation, though the latter ultimately may reach the judgment through sensuous deception. A servant forgetting his place, falls in love with his mistress of noble blood — like Malvolio; a stupid clown seeks the hand of a beautiful and wealthy heiress — like Aguecheek. The ethereal, poetic Titania, Queen of fairyland, becomes infatuated with the gross, prosaic Bottom, fool of fools. All these persons have lost their true relation in the world, and are in pursuit of their own subjective delusions, which, after making them dupes, vanish into nothing. Their purposes break to pieces in the very act of realization. Here are to be reckoned the comic effects of love requited and unrequited, the characters absorbed by a single passion — as avarice or jealousy — odd people, whimsical people, monomaniacs — indeed, most of the delineations of Comic Literature. Still, the limitation before mentioned must not be forgotten, which is liable to be transgressed just at this point. The individual must not be portrayed as devoid of sanity, even in his wildest delusions; otherwise responsibility ceases — we think his acts are not his own; pity takes the place of merriment. The contradiction which excites the laugh is that the deed be irrational, but the doer rational; both elements

must be present. To be comic, not the whole man must be fool, but a part of him.

These absurd ends are pursued in earnest; the character is not usually conscious of their nature. Still, he ought to know better; his conduct deserves to be punished with shouts of laughter. But he may be quite aware of the ridiculousness of what he is doing, and nevertheless do it, and do it seriously. It is possible to be indifferent to the jeers of the world; or, a man may be driven by a passion which is stronger than the fear of ridicule. In this case, however, the result is almost the same as if the comic quality of the act were not known to him. In fact, there is almost every shade from a naive unconsciousness to complete consciousness. With the latter stage a new realm begins to make its appearance.

It is manifest that, in the phase just considered, the Comic Individual has not yet attained perfect freedom — he is still ignorant of a certain element of the nature of his deed; or, he is forced to do what he knows to be ridiculous in order to accomplish his deeper purpose. There is a chasm between his will and his action which is not yet bridged over. Now comes the last and highest development of Comedy — the Comic Individual is not only conscious, but voluntary. He pursues his delusion, knowing that it is a delusion, and because it is a delusion. His purpose is absurd; he intends it to be absurd, and enjoys

its absurdity. His delight is in his own tricks and follies; he makes a comedy for his own amusement. The tinge of seriousness in the character now disappears; the earnest pursuit of a false appearance or delusion has been left behind forever. He performs his own play and is his own audience at the same time, taking delight in his own ridiculousness; he knows and wills himself to be deceived, and then he steps back, as it were, and laughs at himself, as a spectator would do. Who can assail him? He is complete, for he takes into himself all sides; he is free, for he realizes everything which lies in his intention, and his deed has nothing in it which is alien to what he purposes. Here is the climax of Comic Art; only the greatest geniuses have been able to reach such an elevation. The nicest balance must be maintained; the least swerving to the right or to the left causes a rapid descent into lower regions.

But the highest point is the termination; Comedy can go no further. Its very excellence pushes it beyond its limits, and into dissolution. When the Individual becomes conscious that his action is absurd and contradictory, every effort of the mind is usually directed to getting rid of the contradiction. That rational man can be consciously and purposely irrational, is the supreme absurdity, and, hence, this is just the absurdity upon which the supreme comic character reposes. But the logical process cannot stop at such a fine

point of transition. When a person has sense enough to find out that he has no sense, he is already quite sensible. A famous sage of antiquity may be cited. The great saying of Socrates was that, while previous philosophers thought they knew something, but did not know anything, he knew that he knew nothing. This he justly considered to be quite an advance upon former wisdom. To be conscious of our ignorance is much better than to be simply ignorant; such a consciousness already goes far towards lifting us beyond the assault of folly. At this point, therefore, the comic form begins to dissolve; men will no longer pursue a delusive purpose when they become aware of its true nature.

Let us now recapitulate the various principles which have been elaborated. Comedy exhibits the external or internal deception of the Individual, who, however, must not proceed in his delusion to a serious ethical violation, nor transgress the limits of sanity. To bring about his deception there are two instrumentalities — Situation and Character. The first lies in the senses, the second in the mind. Furthermore, Situation has two elements — the relation of the Comic Individual to the physical world on the one hand, and his relation to the persons therein on the other hand; both these relations become false appearances through Natural Resemblance and Intentional Disguise. Comedy of Character has

also two main forms — the Involuntary and Voluntary; the former exhibits man as the unwilling, and for the most part unconscious, victim of some whim, delusion, contradiction; while the latter shows a similar conduct as proceeding from conscious volition.

The relation of the Comic Individual to his audience is also worthy of mention. In the pure Comedy of Situation the audience is always presupposed, and must fully comprehend the nature and cause of the deception; it thus stands entirely above the persons in the play, to whom the matter is of the most serious import. The laugh belongs to the man who is not caught in the dilemma. There is thus between the hearer and actor a chasm which gradually becomes smaller, as we approach Comedy of Character, till, finally, it is wholly filled up and smoothed away in the highest form of the latter. For the Voluntary Comic Individual knows and laughs at his own absurdities — he is both actor and spectator. He has reached the serene height of the happy gods, which can be disturbed by nothing from without. Here is seen the true plastic element of Comedy, as far as such a term can be applied to this realm of Art.

2. *The Comic Action.* — This has the essential elements of every dramatic action, which may be analyzed into the Thread, the Movement, the Collision. The Comic Individual is driven to

act by his delusion; he has an end which he is seeking to realize. He does not usually stand alone, but is surrounded by his instruments, his friends, his enemies, as in real life; there are connected with him a number of persons who have to perform for him certain functions. This constitutes the *Thread*. There is, generally, the one central figure around which the others gather, and which is the bearer of the leading principle; the rest may aid, or also may thwart, the main purpose. Often characters pass from one Thread to another in the course of the play. Shakespeare has never less than two of these Threads, often three, and, sometimes, a nice analysis might find more. But there is a proper limit which ought not be exceeded. There must be neither too few nor too many Threads, and there must be neither too few nor too many characters in a Thread. The genuine dramatic instinct will avoid dearth on the one hand, and undue complexity on the other.

These Threads — or groups, as they may also be called — stand in mutual relation; they run alongside of one another; they also have some common principle of harmony, of contrast, of opposition. They move together through one phase of the action — this is called a *Movement* of the play. Then there follows a transition into a new stage, which must be directly evolved from that which goes before. These transitions are the

great joints of the work, and are to be carefully noted. Such is the Movement — binding together all the Threads, and sweeping forward into a new phase of the play. The comparison may be made with a river which rolls onward as a whole, with all its parallel currents, eddies, and counter-currents, while it passes from one country to another. Of these Movements every drama written by Shakespeare has two or three, but hardly more. The expositor may here be reminded of his duty. He should state in a general form the essential principle of each Movement, point out its limits, and show the ground for the transition into the next Movement.

But the Individual must not merely act, he must also collide. Thus arises the third and principal element of the dramatic action, namely, *the Collision*. A quiet, unopposed development is not life — is not the drama — and would be very tame in representation. A person who undertakes to carry out his purpose must fall into struggle with those who maintain an opposite purpose. The Comic Individual pursues his delusion, and thus he may become involved in a conflict with the institutions of the world — as Family, State, Church; or may disregard the moral elements of society — as Honesty, Truthfulness, temperate Gratification of the senses. The latter are, however, subjective traits of character rather than real ethical principles,

which are always the basis of institutions, and from which the genuine dramatic collision springs. The family is, perhaps, the most common sphere of the comic conflict, particularly on the side of sexual love. The maiden has a suitor to whom the father objects; the old man is tricked by some disguise or deception, and the happy lovers are united at the end of the play. This is, perhaps, Shakespeare's favorite theme — the right of choice against the will of the parent. But Law, Religion, Business — all the social relations of life, may become entangled in the delusion of Comedy. A complete classification of the possible dramatic collisions cannot be given here; it belongs to the General Introduction (see First Volume) where there is also a fuller discussion of Threads and Movements.

3. *The Solution.* — This means that the appearance be dissolved and the reality be restored. That which has caused the delusion in the Comic Individual must vanish, because it is not actual — is untruth. Since the action rests upon some deception, internal or external, this deception must be discovered and brought home to each character; thus the source of the mistakes and complications becomes known. The Solution, however, will vary according to the instrumentality employed. In the case of Natural Resemblance, the persons who are alike are at last brought together, and the similiarity which has

caused so much trouble is detected. Everybody then can account for the mysterious occurrences which have just transpired. In the case of Disguise, since the whole entanglement rests in the mask, this is torn off and the plotter is caught, or, at least, is revealed. Here, too, a touch of retribution may enter for the deception practiced by the contriver. It is satisfactory to see that disguises are not without danger.

But in the case of Comedy of Character the retributive nature of the Solution becomes more prominent, since responsibility for the deed can now be assumed. The subjective delusions and absurdities of a rational man must be brought home to him; his act must come back with a logical rigor, and the drama should show just this return upon the doer. He must be forced to see the folly of his end; he must be made to behold his plan breaking to pieces, as it were, in his very hands, and its consequence visited upon himself. Still, he ought not to lay his whole being in his purpose, for thus he becomes tragic; nor must he be too serious in the execution of his design, else its failure makes him wretched and not comic. He ought to be able to give a free, jovial look, or even laugh, at the disappearing phantom of his brain. The Solution, therefore, for the unconscious, involuntary comic character is that it be made conscious of its folly through the consequences thereof; while for the

voluntary comic character there is really no solution, since it carries its solution within itself all the time. Conscious of its own absurdity, and the results thereof, from the beginning, how can it be made more conscious?

But Comedy inflicts not punishments merely; it has also a system of rewards. For instance, in the sphere of the Family, true love usually finds its recompense, and reciprocal love must inevitably unite its votaries after the struggle. Note the requited affection in a play; against it rises the conflict, but it is always successful in the end. This constitutes the happy conclusion so necessary to a comedy. The like recompense must be shown in the other departments of human action. The same general principle lies at the basis of both reward and punishment — the deed must return upon the doer. To this end, full time is to be given for the natural and complete development, both of the Situation and the Character; hence the solution cannot be precipitated at any moment, but only when it is forced by the logical necessity of the action, and cannot longer be withheld.

The Comic Solution, therefore, ends in the destruction, not of the Individual, but of his deception. He is restored to his senses, and the world is freed of its contradiction; thus all is as it was before. The comic character cannot perish, for it violates no substantial principle, no ethical in-

stitution; or, if it does, it repents of the violation. Herein it differs from the tragic hero on the one hand, and from the villain on the other. The former is both a violator and supporter of the right in the same deed. Guilt results and is followed by death, yet he is not without justification. But the villain is purely a violator without logical motive; his fate cannot properly be dignified with the name of Tragedy; nor is he a comic character, since Comedy will not allow any ethical element to be destroyed. In fact, the mere villain, without relief, approaches the realm of the Ugly, and begins to transcend the limits of Art. In this sense of the word it may be questioned whether any such character is to be found in the works of Shakespeare. The outcome of Comedy, therefore, is mainly the dissolution of the whims, absurdities, and delusions of the rational individual.

The main distinctions which have been above elaborated also rest upon differences of nationality, and, indeed, of race. The Comedy of Situation belongs to Southern Europe, to Spain, Italy and France — to the Romanic peoples generally. Among them it arose and flourished, and from them it was borrowed by the North. It exhibits a people with a cultivated reflection, with a subtle appreciation for every intricate action, with a fine feeling for beauty of situation and theatrical effect. But it also shows a people

whose consciousness has not yet deepened into the full thought of Freedom — a people still entangled in the meshes of a formal externality, still resting in a life of the senses, still believing in a modified form of Fate. Hence man is always portrayed as either the hapless victim or the wanton sport of external circumstances. But Comedy of Character alone can fully satisfy Northern peoples, or the Teutonic race. Its fundamental principle, through all its vagaries and contradictions, is still Freedom — the internal determination of man, and, hence, responsibility for his conduct. It cannot blame, or heartily laugh at, a person for what he cannot help, but it does hold him accountable for his deed. Hence it demands a character which is moved through itself, and not from without. For this reason Shakespeare has been adopted by Teutonic peoples as their representative poet, while to the Romanic race he is still a foreigner.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that Shakespeare has not this Southern element, or could even dispense with its employment. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to the Drama, which must have both circumstance and movement. Comedy of Character cannot do without Situation, though the latter is the subordinate element — is, as it were, the skeleton beneath, which supports the living body. But Situation becomes less prominent as the comic

work of Art reaches its highest sphere; it is reduced to a means for manifesting and upholding the characterization. Shakespeare himself drew nearly all the plots for his comedies from Southern Europe. There they were, already made and awaiting their highest utilization. Such was its contribution to his genius — by no means an insignificant contribution. Nor can we forget that Shakespeare sprang from that composite people, the English, and wrote in a language fused together from the two elements — the Romanic and Teutonic.

III. CLASSIFICATION.—The Comedies of Shakespeare, as we have tried to point out, have as their essential principle Mediation, hence by this principle they ought to be classified. On the whole it is an unsatisfactory way to arrange them according to time of composition, for a final survey; what is more or less accidental and external and not what is essential is thus made the basis of classification. Moreover the chronological order of single plays is not determinable by any dates that we yet possess, though certain groups within a given period we can and must distinguish.

Mediation, accordingly, is the fundamental fact of Shakespearian Comedy, and we observe that it is brought about in two very distinct ways, the first being through the employment of the real world, the second being through the employment of an ideal world. This distinction, then, is the

primal one for our subject, and it divides all of Shakespeare's comedies into two large classes, which we may name respectively *real* and *ideal*, and thus we have Real Comedies and Ideal Comedies of Shakespeare.

In the first class the play opens with some conflict, society is in a state of strife and wrong, or, at least individuals are colliding in support of an ethical principle or in violation of it, or in both regards. To heal such a conflict the Mediation is introduced, which in the present instance, belongs to the sphere of real life. This help may come through a Portia, disguised as a lawyer, who rescues her husband's friend and thwarts the wrongdoer; it may come through a Viola, whose disguise is stripped off and solves all complications. In such case this Mediation takes place in the same realm in which it arises; there is no flight from a real to an ideal world in order to restore the individual and society from struggle to repose.

In the second class likewise the play opens with some conflict; again the individual and society are in a condition of strife and wrong, which has to be healed. But now there is a flight from this actual world of conflict, to an ideal realm where the conflict does not exist. In the present instance, therefore, the Mediation does not take place in the sphere where the difficulty arose, and amid the institutional forms which are themselves

in collision, but in a domain from which they are essentially eliminated — in some sylvan, pastoral, idyllic, or ideal world. Here the colliding individual must remain till, on the one hand, he is prepared for a return to society, and till society, on the other hand, has freed itself from the wrong or strife which compelled him to flee in the first place. Restoration is then possible when on each side the conflict is mediated.

In both these classes, the Real and Ideal, we note that there is substantially the same structure. Every Comedy of Shakespeare has three Movements, or, if you please, three phases of one Movement, which we may call in general, Separation, Mediation, Return. First must be the conflict in some form; but the middle Movement is the mediatorial one, of necessity; while the last shows restoration. These three phases are differently emphasized and differently treated in various plays, but the fundamental structure remains the same in all, in spite of the outer covering; in its way it is as characteristic as the human skeleton, which distinguishes man from the animal. In fact the very notion of Mediation involves the threefold Movement, while that of Tragedy is essentially twofold. Tragedy shows the Ethical World moving into, then out of discord and struggle, and at the same time shows the individual moving into guilt, then into punishment, so that he perishes while the institutional

order is restored. But Comedy mediates both the institutional order and the individual, and is, in its deepest phase the solution of Tragedy. Hence Comedy injects into the tragic Movement a mediatorial one, which is the reconciling mean that overcomes the dualism of death. This thought, indeed, touches the profoundest truth of History. The ancient world was tragic, and passed away; but Mediation came in the person of the Mediator, who thereby saved man, and brought the blissful outcome. Now we may say, in the largest sense of the expression, that the World's History is a Comedy, and hereafter Shakespeare will write it down as such, in his historical plays.

In every exposition of a Comedy, therefore, the fact will have to be noted that there is in it a threefold Movement. So often must this statement of structure be repeated that it may come to seem merely formal to the reader, so that he will regard it as an external scheme clapped on the play, and not an inherent element of the same. But really it is one with the very thought and name of Comedy. The Idea must be seen to be structural, the Idea cannot truly exist without Structure, nor Structure without the Idea. The Idea alone is indefinite, chaotic; Structure alone is hollow, meaningless. Both should be united, and organically united, in any adequate exposition.

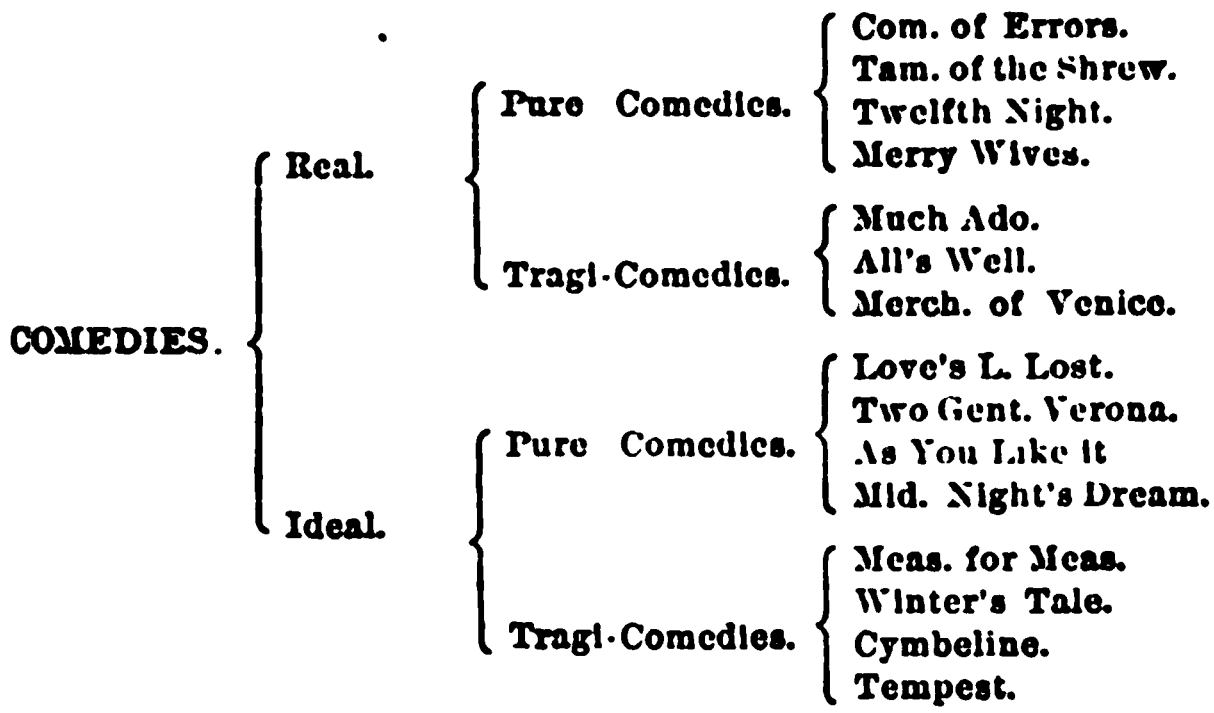
Such is the primary classification of Shakes-

peare's Comedies, that into Real and Ideal; now comes the secondary. We have already noticed how, in certain plays, the Tragic winds into the Comic and gives it a dark, threatening tinge; how again, the Comic altogether prevails, and laughs out of every part of the work in an overflow of jest, humor, and ridiculous situations. Upon this distinction are based two new divisions, called *Pure Comedies* and *Tragi-Comedies*, into which each of the two previous classes is subdivided.

In the Pure Comedies the individual is given over to outer Accident or Chance, and to inner Accident or Caprice. He follows his whim or his senses without the corrective of reason, and so gets entangled in a conflict with the rational order of the world, which at last disciplines him out of his folly and ignorance, and thus restores him in a light-hearted, humorous way. For even Providence is a humorist, and loves to give man the full range of his caprices, that he may enjoy them in their last consequences, and thus possibly get rid of them.

In the Tragi-Comedies the folly deepens to violation, caprice sinks to guilt. Hence the outlook is tragic, the individual must perish unless he undergo a spiritual change. At this point repentance enters and saves the guilty man from death, and the play from being a tragedy. It is not always easy to draw the line between these two divisions; they partake of each other's nature and fade away into a common boundary.

The following tabular statement will give a survey of this classification applied to the fifteen comedies of Shakespeare:



These two classifications grow directly out of the structure. The primary one springs from the nature of the Mediation or the middle Movement, this being either real or ideal. But the secondary classification is derived from the nature of the Threads of the play; if one dark Thread of guilt be woven into its texture, we have the Tragi-comic; if all the Threads show mere folly or mistake, we have the Comic simply. The nature of the Movement and Thread thus determines the nature of the play.

It will be seen that in Shakespeare is to be found the source of that distinction which has divided Art into two Schools, Realists and Idealists, one of which in its excess becomes realistic,

the other fantastic. But in Shakespeare both are valid phases, both are united in the universal poet who cannot be a part or a partisan. His Real Comedies are still the best models for a writer whose object is a true realism; and his Ideal Comedies are still the highest products of the Romantic Drama, and reveal a new form of Art, which images what is deepest and best in the modern world.

IV. THE COMPARATIVE SHAKESPEARE.—Comparison is the chief weapon of Science in these days. Shakespeare, too, in all his phases, is to be subjected to comparison. Chiefly he is to be compared with himself in his various manifestations as they show themselves through his different periods. Thus we may find his law, for, like every genius, he is a law unto himself. An external measure, taken from a foreign source and applied from the outside, will not do for Shakespeare or for any truly original person or thing. The criterion by which he is to be judged is to be derived from himself; the means of deriving it is comparison.

First is the chronological comparison, which specially occupies itself with the dates of his plays and the grouping of them according to time of origin. Almost too much has been done in this field, certainly much that is wholly unnecessary and frivolous; it is a wild waste of conjecture and probability into which one unwillingly

enters. The reason has already been stated why the present work does not classify according to chronology; the reason may be again given: there is no chronology.

Second is the comparison in the realm of Shakespeare's language. This gives the Shakespearian grammar in the widest sense of the word, we might almost say, a Comparative Philology of Shakespeare. Here much good work has been done. Of two books in this department one should not fail to speak. Mr. Abbot's Shakespearian Grammar is a permanent contribution; in it the Poet's language is compared with itself and not forced into alien grammatical tests. The result is a true Grammar. In the realm of lexicography the same thing is done in Dr. Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon. Other departments of Shakespearian philology can be made fruitful in the same way.

Third is the comparison of the plots of the various plays, of their incidents and dramatic instrumentalities. We may take one instance: Shakespeare's supreme women assume a disguise to fulfil their duty; they have to hide their sex and put on man's clothing to accomplish their task in the world. Through his whole life the Poet employs this instrumentality, from Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* to Imogen in *Cymbeline*, from his earliest to his latest period. His best women have to take men's attire and pass

as men to do their work as women. The comparison drives to reflection. Did Shakespeare believe that woman was curtailed in her sphere, compared to man, and that she must be emancipated by having a new costume, more free for activity and without the prejudices attached to the old dress? Certainly the woman in these days is inclined to regard him as the one who understands her best, and she is not averse to taking him as her prophet. Even young ladies look up to him as their exponent and defender; he always makes the daughter triumph over the parent in the choice of a husband. There are but two exceptions to this rule in all his works, and those are only apparent exceptions. It will be seen that a comparison of the incidents which he selected and repeated with slight variations in his different plays will furnish many a glance into the soul-life of the Poet.

Fourth is the comparison of characters. Their variety in Shakespeare is conceded by everybody, yet they have points of agreement, they fall into families more or less closely related, and marked by traits of kinship. The Poet hardly repeats himself, yet we can see that he moulds many diverse shapes after the same model. The mediatorial element, which is the principle of his Comedy he mainly assigns to women; this gives them the essential germ of their character, and calls forth the most brilliant galaxy of

sisters that were ever limned — for they are all sisters, with a common spiritual trait — Portia, Rosalind, Imogen, and a dozen others of the same general outline. One is reminded of the twenty or more Madonnas of Raphael at present known — all having the family resemblance, all of the same fundamental type, yet all different, of different degrees of excellence, culminating at last in the highest. The Sistine Madonna of Shakespeare is Hermione, the mother with the child, who is to be sacrificed and yet to be regained, the woman who wins by endurance. Yet she is only one of a sisterhood. In like manner men may be compared, and clowns and lovers and servants; the comparison truly made always brings its revelation.

Fifth is the comparison of the ethical idea of the various plays. This rises above and includes character and all individuality; it organizes the dramatic movement and gives the dramatic structure. It is the highest point of view from which we can look at Shakespeare; it is the comparison which is the object and end of all other comparison. A new quality of mind is now required, or at least a new birth of an old one; not merely a collating and inferring, but a seeing is demanded; to comparison must now be added insight — insight into the Poet's world-order, of which each play is some special manifestation. To reach this insight, we have not merely to read

his work, but to create it over again in reading it; we have to think his thought after him with something like his original creative energy.

In the movement of this ethical idea, as manifested in Shakespeare's Comedy, there is first some conflict, some separation, some obstacle external or internal, or both; then there is the mediation, the strong inherent activity of the Ethical World to remove the obstacle to its supremacy, and restore both itself and the conflicting individuals to harmony. A sweep into and out of disorder is seen, showing both the cause and the cure of the trouble.

V. The Real Comedies. — Already we have divided Shakespearian Comedy, according to the mediating thought, into Real and Ideal. Still further the first class was subdivided into two groups, Pure Comedies and Tragi-Comedies. The plays of these two classes we shall now join together in a short summary, the object of which is to bring out the Ethical Idea, and to make it the basis of comparison in these dramas.

1. *The Pure Comedies.* — In general, they have two essential threads, both of which are comic — the one being more elevated is put into verse, the other being of a lower order is put into prose. Also the mediation is comic, and is brought about through the instrumentalities of comedy, such as Mistaken Identity, which gets rid of the mistake, and Caprice, which destroys itself. The comic

characters are the victims of some delusive appearance, inner or outer, which dissolves before their own eyes in the solution. The element of the Ethical World in which these dramas move is the Family, with Society and State slightly playing about in the background. The Family is employed in two phases: the actual Family or the union through and after marriage, and the possible Family, or love, which is the feeling of union before marriage, and which drives the individual into the actual Family or the ethical relation of the sexes.

Into this group we place four of Shakespeare's comedies. In *Comedy of Errors*, which is the Poet's first play in the order of thought, and probably in the order of time also, we see the actual Family composed of parents and children separated by Accident, which is then overcome by Accident in the form of Natural Resemblance. This is the most superficial of all kinds of mediation, hardly involving any internal principle. In *Taming of the Shrew* the possible Family, love, is jeopardized by the double wrong of the father against his two daughters. The conflict is mediated by a double Disguise, the external one of the lover Lucentio, and the internal one of the lover Petruchio, who, in the mask of caprice, destroys caprice. In *Twelfth Night* the possible Family is wholly separated from the actual family, not through the conduct of the

parent, but through unrequited love — a purely internal obstacle. Moreover, this unrequited love is double, and is shown in two threads: true love, which has its end in itself, and false love, which has an ulterior end, as wealth. The mediation is, accordingly, double: true love finds its fruition in the actual Family through a change of individuals, which is brought about by Natural Resemblance and Disguise; false love is thwarted, punished and excluded from the Family. Thus we see both the positive and negative solutions of unrequited love. In *Merry Wives of Windsor* we advance to a conflict in both the possible and actual Family — a conflict with the union before marriage and after marriage. These are the two threads: in the first, the wife maintains the honor of the Family against both the libertine and the jealous husband; in the second, the maiden upholds the right of love against both father and mother. The woman is again the mediator of her institution, the Family; the mediation is accomplished mainly through Disguise external and internal.

2. *The Tragi-Comedies.* — This is an unfortunate word for the present purpose, but, after some search, no better one could be found. Tragi-Comedy ordinarily conveys the notion of a burlesque; not so here. It is intended to designate those dramas, which, having a possible tragic collision are mediated, and the end is

happy. There is that intensity of purpose and truth of principle, which give to the characters, or to the greater part of them, a serious coloring by which these plays are distinguished. The mediation in this group also takes place in the real world, not in some ideal realm. Three dramas are placed in this division; the movement of the mediating idea in each of them may be succinctly stated for comparison.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* the conflict lies in the possible Family, that is, before marriage. Two pairs of lovers are torn asunder, the one from an internal, the other from an external, cause. The mediation corresponds: the one pair is brought together internally, through the working of their own natures, aided by a slight trick; the other pair is brought together externally, in part through the Friar (Church), and in part through the stupid officials (State). The play is about equally divided between the serious and comic elements, and lies not far from the border-land of Pure Comedy. In *All's Well that Ends Well* the coloring is darker. The actual Family, that is the union after marriage, is disrupted by the estrangement and flight of the husband; both his internal and external restoration to the Family is accomplished by the devotion and skill of the wife. In *Merchant of Venice* the woman appears as mediator both before and after marriage. Her own conflict with the will of the parent she solves

happily; then she moves forth to solve the great conflict between the formal Law and the higher Equity, or between Justice and Mercy. The career of Portia is the grandest mediatorial sweep in Shakespeare; it mounts up and moves on the track of the World's History, in the transition from the old dispensation into the new. Hence this play may be put as the key-stone into the arch of Shakespeare's comedies.

VI. SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POET. — We have sought to trace the fundamental principles controlling Shakespeare's procedure in his comedies, which were written through all periods of his life and bear the impress of his lightest moods as well as of his profoundest thought. How he deepened from *Comedy of Errors*, probably his first play, to *Tempest*, probably his last play, has been suggested, and will be further developed in the special treatment of the comedies, which is now to follow. But we have also endeavored to unfold and to formulate the unity which underlies his entire varied development in the realm of Comedy. Without understanding this unity we cannot be said to understand Shakespeare.

Still the question will arise, was the Poet conscious of all this planning, this philosophizing? It is a loud demand of these analytic days, a demand that must be respected, to discover how far the artist is aware of his own procedure. But it does not follow, even if it be granted that

he is unconscious in his greatest works, that they have no principle which we must obtain consciously. The Poet may have merely to put together; we have to take apart and then put together, if we would truly know his building. Doubtless it is possible to enjoy the sensuous intoxication of his poetry without ever beholding the spiritual world which it reveals; enjoyment is not knowledge.

But Shakespeare shows in many ways that he has carefully studied the principles of his Art. Indeed he would not be the universal Poet, unless his thought was as deep as his instinct, his judgment as great as his spontaneity, his self-mastery as strong as his passion. The reflective and the impulsive, the conscious and the unconscious, the thought and the deed are but the sides which make up the entirety of his genius. If we keep watch over him with attention, we shall find him uttering not only the image, but the idea, of his work. But even when there is no direct clew in the play, we can often catch and hold fast the poetic Proteus in the very act of transformation. We find his sources in old legends, stories and plays, then we compare his completed works with these sources; we note the additions, the changes, and know that they must have been made with intention. The Poet must have been aware of the alterations he was making; and would not he, certainly a reflective, prying man with a Hamlet

in his soul, ask why he made them? Still there is no design of affirming that Shakespeare was altogether the self-conscious poet; that would be to put a fatal limitation upon him from another side.

Moreover, the reader should not expect too much of interpretation; no analysis of an artistic work can take the place of the work itself. An explanation of wit is not, and ought not to be, witty, else it is no true explanation; criticism of poetry, too is not poetical, but it must quite free itself of the poetical form. A statement of the chemical ingredients of water will not take the place of water itself to a thirsty man; just as little can the sensuous charm and exhilaration of Art be supplied by an abstract account of its content. The feelings often revolt against an analytic interpretation, because people expect too much; they are dissatisfied at the absence of what seems the very essence of the production, namely, the sensuous form. But explanation implies always a change of this form, which is, therefore, just the side which disappears. Poetical natures strongly protest against the substitution of the interpretation for the poem. They are right; no such substitution ought for a moment to be entertained by the critic.

But to ascertain the rationale of an artistic product is not only reasonable, but indispensable. A great drama is a phenomenon quite as wonder-

ful as any which Nature furnishes; let its law be investigated and stated as soon as possible. In fact, Art can be elevated and sustained only by the retroactive power of the critical judgment. The difference between a barbarous and a cultivated taste is acknowledged; whence does it arise? Only from the application of truer canons of Art. But these canons are originally derived from the understanding, though they descend into the feelings and become instinctive in their influence upon the taste of the individual. Simple emotion is blind; it should be directed and filled with intelligence. One should feel deeply about that which is rational; reason ought always to furnish the content. The difference between the savage and the civilized man lies, not so much in the feelings themselves, as in the objects about which each person feels. Do not, therefore, read an interpretation of a work of Art with the expectation of finding therein the imaginative or emotional element of that work — disappointment will surely follow.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

This play should be placed first in the list of Shakespeare's Pure Comedies, not only on account of the period of its origin, but also on the score of logical development. It is simply a comedy of Situation, whose sole instrumentality is Natural Resemblance, for not even Disguise is employed. It, therefore, exhibits an action of the most external kind; human purpose is almost wholly removed from its sphere. Man is thus represented as controlled by chance; his will is reduced to the narrowest limits possible. All the individuals — even the clowns — are fully in earnest in the pursuit of their ends, though these ends are an utter deception. The characters are always doing something quite different from what they seem to be doing; there is an appearance continually dancing before their senses, whereby they are led into the most ridiculous acts. Comic Situation, into which the individual is thrust from without, through no volition of his own, is the rule of this drama; life is a complete, sensuous delusion. Nowhere else has the Poet indulged in such a play of wholly external influences.

It is easy to see that there can be but little development of character in a work of this kind. Character rests upon the internal nature of the person; his disposition must be shown in his actions, and his actions must, therefore, be made the means of its portraiture. For the Drama takes the human deed as the vehicle of expressing the feelings, motives, purposes, thoughts, — in fine, the entire spiritual nature — of man. Such is the Drama in its highest form. Freedom cannot be wholly obliterated. But, if the individual is made the victim of chance — of unforeseen external power — his character has little to do with his destiny. He is determined, not from within, but from without; his enforced actions thus become a very slight indication of his nature. Still, no doubt there is some manifestation of character, even under such circumstances, though it is very superficial and inadequate. In the present drama, therefore, characterization stands decidedly in the background. We are to think only of the ridiculous situations in which the people who appear in it are placed.

The characterization, incomplete as it is, should, however, be noticed, and contrasted with the riper procedure of the Poet. It moves in certain stiff, traditional types, which hardly rise to a living, concrete individuality — that is, the persons are more like puppets than complete men and women — an abstraction rather than a reality.

Let us take notice of the most definite figures here. The two Dromios are the ever-recurring clowns, with their merry pranks; Pinch is the old picture of the narrow-minded pedant, which is repeated by Shakespeare several times without essential variation. Adriana is a jealous shrew, whose scolding propensity the Poet will develop fully in a succeeding drama. All these forms are borrowed from older and foreign comedies. Their bareness is manifest; one or two peculiarities make up the sum of their characterization; the complete exhibition of all the qualities of a subjective nature, such as we find in other creations of the Poet, is wanting. The individual, when thus made purely the sport of external influences, cannot show any of the deeper elements of character.

There are three movements in the drama, though the first and last are very short — the one having more the nature of an introduction, the other of a hasty close. We are, in the beginning, told of the disruption of the family of Ægeon: this is the serious — indeed, almost tragic — background of the action; it furnishes the ethical element in which the play moves. The second part shows the "errors" which are rendered possible by this separation of the members of the Family. Here are found the comic situations, as well as the greater portion of the drama. The mistakes of the two pairs of twins,

through Natural Resemblance, spring from their previous separation. The third part is the mutual recognition of parents and children, and the restoration of all the members of the disrupted Family. This reunion, in its turn, results from the mistakes which produce so much confusion.

I.

The first movement, which is not dramatic at all, but rather an explanatory prologue, is the narrative of Ægeon, who is the father, and, therefore, the head of the Family. The two pairs of twins, and their personal resemblance, are noted; but an accident — a shipwreck — has separated Ægeon from his wife, from one of his sons, and one of the servants. Many years have elapsed; the twins have grown up to manhood; their relations, however, are unknown to themselves, to their parents, and to the world. Should they happen to meet, then the mistakes would follow. The family of Ægeon is thus cut in two just in the middle. Now comes the second separation — the father permits the remaining son and servant to travel in search of the lost brother. But they, too, disappear — do not return to the parent. We also learn, later in the play, that a corresponding misfortune happens to the mother in respect to the other children. Thus the Family seems utterly disrupted and destroyed, but just this unhappy condition of things is the

basis for a return to unity. The present family is endowed with certain peculiarities which will rescue it — which will force the world to untie the knot of difficulties which arise. These peculiar elements are the double pair of twins, the personal resemblance of the twin sons and of the twin servants, and the identity of their respective names. Here we see the chief means for a discovery of the lost members, and their restoration to the Family.

It will be seen that Accident — the accident of the resemblances and the further accident of the separations — is made the deity of this lower world; in fact, it is given such a wide sway, that it becomes incredible, improbable. But it is the Poet's plan to endow it with absolute rule for once, and see what it will do with itself. What will the Goddess Chance make out of the government of this universe? Here we can see; she annuls herself, she cannot exist alone; that is, external Accident, like internal Caprice, if given full rein, destroys its own end, undoes itself and brings forth the world of order. In other words, such a world is comic; indeed, it could not exist in the first place without something underneath it to hold it up.

It is, therefore, necessary to notice the institutional realm within which this chapter of accidents is playing. Both Family and State are hovering in the distance; Ægeon, the father, in

trying to bring together the scattered members of his domestic hearth, has fallen into the clutches of the law which is about to exècute him. Thus even the State as well as the untamed elements of Nature seem to be hostile to the restoration of the family which is torn asunder on all sides. But the interest is to see that all this misfortune is just the way to its union; the height of separation puts an end to separation. Doubtless to the individuals caught in the net, the matter is serious enough for the time being; still they do not use judgment, but follow outward appearance. We, the witnesses, see that the whole is the comedy of Accident which is destroying itself by conflicting with the supreme order. Providence, if you will, is bringing the scattered members of the family together, but he puts on the mask of confusion, and makes horrible grimaces, whereat the puny individual gets frightened, not seeing his true face, till the mask is thrown off. But we must look through the appearance, must peep under the providential mask, if we wish to behold the comedy.

Not that the Poet had consciously any such plan; it is not intended to affirm that he philosophized in this way, but that he poetized in this way. He seized the entire fact — here the fact of Accident — in the form of an image or action; the thinker seizes it in the form of a thought; both ways show truth, indeed the same truth.

It will be noticed, too, that mediation is the principle of this light play even; the individual is mediated with his ethical world, and this world is mediated with itself, when fallen into momentary confusion. The ground being cleared, and the presuppositions being explained, the main action may now be unfolded.

II.

The second movement shows the mistakes which arise from a double Natural Resemblance, and the consequences of taking one person for another in society. These consequences are carried to such a degree of bewilderment that quite all the relations of life become confused and uncertain, and everything fixed seems to be unsettled; even institutions are turned into the sport of accident. The one thread moves about the Ephesian Antipholus as the central figure; he is a substantial and well-known citizen — an old an intimate friend of the ruler; in times past he has been a brave soldier in defense of the country. He is married also, and thus belongs to the domestic relation; still further, he is engaged in business, and, hence, is brought into familiar contact with the other members of the community. It will be seen that he is an important personage of society, to which he stands in manifold relations. He is known by everybody, and is recognized as having a certain

established position and character. In general, he is the substantial man who is connected by an indefinite number of ties with the world around him. Now, into this net-work, a total stranger is introduced, who resembles him, and is everywhere taken for him. This is the Syracusan Antipholus, who is wholly unknown to all these relations, still he is thrown into them; neither he nor society is aware of the change. Personal resemblance is the cause of the mistakes, and the sameness of names prevents the deception from being discovered. The remarkable result is that, by the displacement of one individual, the whole community is thrown into disorder.

To introduce more complications, the same circumstances are repeated in the two servants. The foreign Dromio is put into the relations of the Ephesian Dromio; there thus arises a continual crossing of purposes, which can almost be reduced to a mathematical diagram, so completely external is the procedure.

The first of these relations which is seriously disturbed is that of master and servant. The double similarity becomes the source of the most ridiculous confusion. The one Dromio is sent out upon an errand, and meets the wrong master; it is evident that their presuppositions are entirely different — that their talk will lie in two wholly separate worlds. The result is that at first each supposes the other to be jesting; but

afterwards the matter becomes serious, and the servant gets a flogging. Now, when the rightful servant appears, he is no longer in his former relation to his master, on account of the intervention of the former servant. So they pass and repass, with increasing entanglement; one party sends a Dromio, who comes to the wrong master with an incomprehensible message. All soon see that something is out of joint, yet what it is they cannot tell; some external influence is clearly interfering, which is the more terrible because unknown. The Syracusan master and servant become frightened; they very naturally conclude that Ephesus is the land of spirits and goblins; they will leave it at the earliest opportunity. But here, again, trouble arises; cause and effect no longer hold; their means for departure are defeated at every move. Dromio is sent to find a ship to sail away in, and brings back a remittance of money. Thus they are tossed about—the helpless victims of chance. It is no wonder that they believe themselves to be dreaming, to be transformed into beasts, to have come to a supernatural realm, for all natural mediation has ceased.

Next the difficulty is carried into the Family. The wife sends the servant to bring her husband home to dinner; again the wrong man is found; it is the Syracusan Antipholus, who has no wife, and who denies the relation on the spot. His

answer is brought back to her; the result is a violent fit of jealousy. Then the woman appears in person — berates the stranger for his infidelity; the ethical feeling of the wife thus becomes comic, for its object is an appearance — a delusion. But he has to go home with her to dinner; the integrity of the Family seems in jeopardy; we tremble lest the mistake may lead to an ethical violation. But a happy turn is made — the young Syracusan is attracted to the unmarried sister, and turns away from the married woman. Now all is again right and proper. This sister, too, is victimized, for she thinks she is receiving the attentions of her brother-in-law — a fact, which, no doubt, makes her hesitate longer than she otherwise would. Then comes the true husband to his own house; he finds himself locked out, and appearances look very suspicious; in his spleen he goes off and indulges in a naughty revenge. In all these cases the manifold relations of the Family are endangered by a mere appearance; the individuals are victims of a mistake; one person is substituted for another in the wrong place. The result is that the ethical ties of marriage, for a time, become the playthings of accident. The same phase is reflected in low life in the affair of Dromio and the kitchen queen.

Other complications follow, which it is not necessary to give in detail; the result is, the wife and the community consider the husband to be

mad, and Pinch is called upon to cast out the devil. This is the extreme point; man now seems to be irrational — seems to have lost entirely the ability of understanding his relation in the world. Yet it is an appearance merely; Antipholus is still sane, though he is now bound like a maniac. The truth is, society itself has become irrational in its delusion; Mistaken Identity has brought it to the verge of dissolution. But the Family is quite disrupted, for the husband who is here in chains, must charge, and indeed, does charge, the wife with the worst species of infidelity. Such is the outcome of the domestic thread of the play. The comic element is that the whole difficulty is a phantom springing from a deception of the senses; the spectator knows where the trouble lies, and is aware that there is no real conflict; he can laugh to his heart's content at a collision which must vanish at once when the cause of the delusion is discovered.

The third principle which is involved in this entanglement is business — the commercial relations of the community. Of Angelo, the goldsmith, a chain has been ordered, which he, however, delivers to the wrong Antipholus, and afterwards demands payment of the other Antipholus. The matter is at first treated as a jest, then it grows serious, and at last an officer is called in to enforce the demand. Here Authority is drawn into the meshes, and is victimized by an

appearance. Moreover, the goldsmith wants to pay his debts with the money; his good name and commercial credit are involved. Public order is disturbed; an encounter takes place on the street, when the Syracusan pair flee to an abbey — to the protection of a religious house, whereby the abbess, a representative of the Church, becomes entangled in the fantastic sport of chance. Let us notice the situation. The community has now unconsciously eliminated both disturbing elements; the two pairs cannot live in the same society if their resemblance continues to remain unknown. Yet they have done no wrong. But the difficulty cannot rest here; the abbess has defied the Family in the wife, and the Law in the officer; the conflict can only be settled by an appeal to the supreme authority of the land.

This is the State, whose highest representative — the Duke — now comes along very conveniently, bringing Ægeon to execution for a violation of law. All parties rush forward to the ruler with their grievances; the testimony is heard, but the strange thing is that each side produces several witnesses and proves the truth of its statement; the evidence of the senses becomes a mass of confusion and contradiction. The ruler is himself drawn into the delusion; he concludes that they all have drunk of Circe's cup. To solve the difficulty is beyond his power; the matter is incapable of any adjustment. The supreme institution — the

State — which has to secure justice to man, is whirled into the wild play of chance, and cannot perform its function. The drama can go no further: the solution must soon come, or human institutions will show themselves less firm and substantial than an empty appearance. So much for the second movement.

III.

The third essential element of the action is now to be unfolded, namely, the discovery of the difficulty, and the restoration of the separated members of the Family. For the mystery will be pursued until its origin is found; the human mind is rational, and cannot believe that the world is irrational; it must investigate any unusual disturbance of causation. Ægeon, the father, is present with the Duke, as before stated; he recognizes his son, whom, however, he takes to be the Syracusan Antipholus; but Resemblance still has sway, for it is the Ephesian Antipholus. Then the Syracusan Antipholus appears; at once the source of the sensuous deception is brought home to the senses themselves when the brothers are seen side by side. Moreover, there is now a mutual recognition between the one son and the father; they have been separated only a few years. The mother is found in the abbess; Ægeon is pardoned; all the members of the Family are again united. The other apparent conflicts of the wife

Adriana, of Business, of the State, are fully explained; the delusion vanishes like a dream; ethical harmony once more prevails; the world is no longer a deceptive mirage of which man is the helpless victim.

The solution of a comedy which rests upon Natural Resemblance is thus made manifest. The resembling individuals are brought together — in fact, they are forced together by the disturbance which they produce. The cause is then clear; the serious purposes, the angry conflicts are traced to a mistake — to a false conclusion resulting from a sensuous appearance. Such is the one instrumentality of the present play — Natural Resemblance — whose combinations are quite exhausted in its manifold situations. This narrowness makes it somewhat bald and abstract; its externality, too, can never engage human interest very deeply. Still, the simple means is wonderfully employed; it temporarily reduces to its sway the highest institutions, and confounds all the relations of life; to the individual the world seems enchanted, while to the world the individual seems crazy — that is, both sides have lost their true relation toward each other; both sides appear to have become irrational. We are reconciled, however, with this unfree and chaotic representation of human action when we see its profound ethical purpose, namely, the restoration of the disrupted Family.

Let us, even at the risk of being charged with

undue subtilization, try to reach down to the foundation of the dramatic instrumentality here employed. Mistaken Identity, as used in this and other comedies, shows how the individual is through society, and society through the individual. We see that, if one unit be displaced and another taken for it, the whole fabric will fall into disorder. All must be reflected in each, and each in all. If one person is put in the place of another person without their knowing the fact and without society's knowing it — that is, without the reflection of all in the one, and of the one in all — the world becomes a craze, and man seems to be irrational. The individual must have society, in which he finds his true relations — he can exist as a reasonable being only in society; on the other hand, society requites the favor and recognizes him as this individual, and none other, in all his manifold relations, and thus gives him a true objective personality. Mistaken Identity steps between society and the individual, and, for a time, destroys their connection. Each side, having existence through the other, will, by such separation, rapidly pass into confusion and dissolution. But the difficulty rests upon Mistaken Identity, not upon Lost Identity; the trouble, therefore, is not permanent, but the mistake is discovered, and the old relations are all restored.

The play before us is, hence, to be classified as a comedy of Situation, whose instrumentality is

the first in order, the simplest, and most external of all — Natural Resemblance. Such was the Poet's beginning; how his Comedy deepens, and becomes more concrete in its means and in its characters, will be seen in the plays to be discussed hereafter.

The interpretation should bring out prominently the ethical elements, which always constitute the living principle of the Drama. These ethical elements are not intended to be confined to mere subjective morality — to the demands of individual conscience. Their purport is far broader; the Ethical World signifies essentially the world of institutions. In the present drama the Family is the sphere in which the action takes place, though other institutions play in; the movement is from the separation of its members to their restoration; between these two extremes lies the entire work.

The disruption of the closest domestic ties is of tragic import, and constitutes the serious element of the drama under consideration. The background is dark and threatening, whose most somber shade is found in the fate of Ægeon, who is even being led out to execution. The parent, in search of his children, has fallen into conflict with Law. Here we behold a genuine tragic collision, with its two justifiable sides; that is, both Ægeon and the Duke have grounds of right for their actions. But of course the comic element

is paramount, and is strengthened by contrast with the serious thread. Its force lies in deception, in the reduction of the individnal and society to a huge delusion, in making institutions the sport of a mere appearance.

Thus both the Tragic and Comic are present, side by side, though not interpenetrating and transfused, as in the Tragi-Comedies. Another point must not be overlooked — the entire comic effect rests upon the fact that the audience fully understands the source of the mistakes and complications; the characters, too, for the most part, are in deep earnest, and do not sport with themselves; thus there is felt to be a chasm between the laughing spectator and the sober-faced actor. Such is, however, the nature of all Comedy of Situation: the audience must be placed above the deception of the characters. These are shown in submission to external Accident, following blindly their senses, without correcting the latter by their judgment, though the means of such correction is certainly suggested. Especially is this the case with the Syracusan Antipholus. He is searching for a brother, yet never thinks that all this trouble may be caused by a brother who resembles him; he is called by name in a hostile city, where to name him means death, yet he can solve the problem, not by intelligence, but only by ascribing the world to magic. Again and again Accident throws him back upon thought,

but he will not think; in fact, the world of Accident must be inhabited by just such people, the two are counterparts. Chance can rule only when men are all senses, but have no sense.

Still even such people are to be saved and restored after passing through a rough comic discipline. If there had been no disturbance, there would have been no restoration; the trouble heightens till the knot be untied. All this comedy, then, is simply to mediate a diffculty, to restore union and harmony. Thus we see the double movement of the play: a world based on Accident is comic, annuls itself, and vanishes into a rational order; the individuals dwelling in such a world are comic, and must be disciplined out of it into a rational life. Thus Accident even is endowed with a mediatorial function; it has its place in the universal system. So we follow our light-hearted Poet in his divine loyalty, though there be at times a little too much scolding, and even trouncing among the victims of his comic Purgatory.

Thus these people of the play have been separated by Accident, and also restored by Accident, which undoes in this manner its own work. In many ways the legends of peoples have embodied the same thought. There is hardly a doubt that Shakespeare modeled his drama after the *Menœchmi* of the Latin poet Plautus, who derived it from Greek sources. The dramatic

plot goes back to classic antiquity for its fountain head, coming down through Greek, Latin and Italian channels into the English drama, in which it was naturalized already before the time of the Poet, who, as usual, seized the materials prepared for his hand. But Shakespeare transforms the story handed down to him by making it complete in meaning. For instance, he adds the two Dromios, the second set of resembling twins; thus he heaps Accident upon Accident, that it may show fully its world. In Plautus there is no Duke, hence no State playing into the confusion and getting confused; no father and mother, Ægeon and Emilia, with their final recognition and restoration of the Family; no men of business, like Angelo and the merchants, who are also drawn into the comic whirl of delusions; above all, no adequate solution of the realm of Accident. Shakespeare transfigures the Latin poet in this light comedy even, which is probably his earliest work, and shows the germs of his entire dramatic development.

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

The sole comic instrumentality of *Comedy of Errors* was said to be Natural Resemblance. A step in advance is now to be taken; the essential principle of *Taming of the Shrew* is Disguise. Comedy of Situation will thus have shown its two fundamental forms in these two dramas, and there will have been manifested the progress from the less concrete form, in which human freedom is not yet developed, to the more concrete form, in which one individual, at least, is free. For an external resemblance is unknown to the persons who happen to be alike, whereas a disguise must be known to one of the characters at all events. Still, in the play before us, Disguise is not the sole element; there is also the rude, yet bold, advance to characterization. This principle is seen in Katharine and Petruchio, whose peculiar traits, and not the external situation, constitute the emphatic point of the action. Hence Comedy of Character begins to make its appearance, in its definite shape, in *Taming of the Shrew*, although Comedy of Situation, in the form of Disguise, is still the paramount element. The interest of the play lies chiefly in tracing

this inner development, and in unfolding the relation to the other works of the Poet, who can now be seen rising from the simplest and most jejune to the richest and most varied manifestations of his Art.

If we grasp together the entire action of *Taming of the Shrew*, its scheme will be found to be a play within a play. Thus its nature is double; but this duplicity falls asunder into two wholly separate parts, and the work quite loses its unity — at least, the connecting thread is very slender. The twofold element is not worked into symmetry; it is not fused together into an harmonious unity. In later dramas the Poet will employ this form of a play within a play with supreme effect, and mould its contradictory sides into a consistent and beautiful totality. Here, however, he drops the one part with the so-called Induction, except in a few short passages. It would seem as if he could not fully master his plan, and was compelled to throw it aside; indeed, his procedure, judged by his riper method, will be seen to be inadequate.

The significance of a play within a play is that the audience is taken into the action, which is thus doubled and rendered more difficult of development. The spectator beholds, not only a representation of some occurrence, but also a representation of himself as a spectator of that occurrence. The play plays itself for itself; the

theater seems no longer separated by the chasm between actors and audience, but both become one — each side is present upon the stage. Now, if the whole drama is set in such a frame-work, the actual spectator becomes superfluous and drops out, for he is no longer addressed; such a dramatic form, therefore, is too large, and transcends the inherent limitation of the Art. But if, on the contrary, such a play within a play is introduced only in the course of the main action, and is subordinated wholly to it, then we have a very effective instrument of dramatic power. This is seen, for instance, in *Hamlet* and in *Tempest*, where the mature procedure of the Poet is manifest. But in *Taming of the Shrew* he instinctively dropped the unwieldy form with which he began; he had to abandon the audience on the stage for the real audience. Hence there are two parts, which may be developed in succession.

The Induction is only a preparation for something which never takes place, and, accordingly it stands by itself. Its comic effects proceed from Disguise, not of persons merely, but of the whole external world which surrounds the individual. Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker of the humblest condition of life, is suddenly transferred to the dwelling of a nobleman, and is made to believe that he is a great lord. On all sides he beholds the evidence of wealth and luxury; beau-

tiful pictures and gorgeous tapestry strikes his eye in every direction; delicious music falls upon his ear; the fragrance of rose water is not omitted in this fairy-land of pleasure — in fine, every object which can enchant and seduce the senses of man is suddenly thrust upon the poor and dissipated tinker. Servants approach, with submissive mien, to offer their services; even a wife appears, the fair lady of the mansion, who caresses him and loads him with affectionate attentions. It is plain that the object here is to disguise the external surroundings, to make the individual believe that his past life has been a dream, to possess him with the notion that the real is unreal and that the unreal is real. The whole plan rests upon deception of the senses, and, unless these senses are corrected and guided by the understanding, a human being is seen to be no more than a dream. The world into which Sly is suddenly thrust is so delightful, so intoxicating, that he, being a man of sensual gratification merely, is easily deluded — in fact, must be deluded — into the belief in its existence and in his changed condi tion. The nature of this disguise should be noticed; it is not the disguise of persons merely, but of persons and all their surroundings — it is the disguise of the whole external world. Hence Mistaken Identity of the person is not the principle here.

But the main element of deception is the play, which is now to be acted before the tinker. This gives the sole motive for its introduction. Like a lord of that time, he commands the players to be brought in, and their representation is given in his own house. Thus it will be seen that the play within the play has reference to Sly alone. But, from the time it begins till the end, this side drops quite out of sight; the actors direct themselves to the real audience. We may now follow their example, and give a brief analysis of the drama which they are representing, without paying any further attention to the Induction. The connection between the two parts, though slight, and not by any means organic, should, however, be observed. Both have Disguise as their comic instrumentality, though in different manners — the one has the disguise of the external world, the other of persons alone.

The ethical movement of the play lies wholly in the sphere of the Family. Parental violation places itself in the way of marriage, and, hence, must be met and overcome. The father, by his action, has really excluded his two daughters from a rational union; he is, therefore, the obstacle which is to be removed in the course of the drama. He thus commits a wrong against his children, though in the exercise of a valid authority. The comic effect of the character is

that we witness how rapidly and completely he is reduced to nothing when he sets himself against the higher principle, namely, the right of the child to enter the Family. The gentle and dutiful daughter hoodwinks her parents in order to marry the man whom she loves; the rough and undutiful daughter has to be forcibly subordinated to the domestic relation by her husband, after her father has rendered that relation well-nigh impossible through his weakness and neglect. The movement is, therefore, from the double violation of the parent to the restoration of the children to the Family. The laugh turns against the man who seeks to nullify an institution in maintaining some less important right of his own; he is made a shadow, a mockery, a comic character.

The general organization of the play proper may be grasped by the mind in about the following manner: The first movement will portray the wrong of the parents, and will also introduce the means whereby it is ultimately overcome. The second movement will exhibit the conflict between parent, suitors, and daughters in its full vigor and with manifold complications. Here each daughter is the center of a distinct group; the result in both cases is the triumph of the principle of the Family. The third movement will show the reconciliation of the successful pairs with all the elements which were before antagonistic to their union.

I.

1. The drama at once introduces to us one of the foreign suitors, Lucentio, with his servant Tranio. Lucentio is a young man of wealthy and distinguished parentage, whose home is in the neighboring city of Pisa; he has come to Padua — "nursery of arts" — for the purpose of instituting "a course of learning and ingenious studies." His external qualifications are told in order to show that he was, in all respects, the peer of Bianca. In birth, wealth, and social position there seems to be but little difference between them, nor were they unsuitable in age. But the true internal bond of attraction lies in their common intellectual pursuits — in their aspiration for culture; both exhibit, not only an interest, but a strong desire for learning. The servant, Tranio, is also worthy of note; he is not the low clown, like Grumio, but he is a polished man of the world. Dressed in the clothes of his master, he can play the part of a gentleman with admirable dexterity. He is more the companion than the menial of his superior, who consults him on all important matters. Still, both these persons are stiff and conventional shapes, without any very distinct individuality of character.

The second of the foreign suitors appears

somewhat later, but may be mentioned here. It is Petruchio, who is depicted with a most decided dramatic vitality. He has gone through the roughest experiences of the world; in wild adventures on land and sea he has been hardened in body, and, it would seem, to a still greater degree hardened in will. On slight provocation he takes his servant, Grumio, by the ears; in fact, both master and servant here stand on the rudest contrast to Lucentio and Tranio. Each set has its function to perform, and is gifted with just the qualities requisite for its work. The coarse nature of Petruchio cares to wed only for money, while Lucentio will yield to love alone.

2. Such are the two chief instrumentalities; we are now ready to cast a look at the elements which they are to work upon. Here comes what we are seeking — the parent, Baptista, with his two daughters, Bianca and Katharine — to which group may be conveniently added the two native suitors of Bianca, Gremio and Hortensio. The maidens naturally catch our first glance. Katharine is the shrew — she is utterly refractory to every rational restraint. The difficulty is that the father has never been able to subordinate her to the proper position of a child of the Family. She has now come to defy social usages; prescription is a barrier which it is her delight to leap over. Katharine has, therefore, received no domestic education; the parent cannot avoid taking

his share of the blame — the primary foundation of character, the training of the child and its subjection in the Family, is wholly wanting. What is the result of this neglect? It is seen in a disposition which may be called absolute caprice — which recognizes no demands of social etiquette, no restraints of the tongue, nor even the ties of blood. She is the wanton tyrant of Bianca, who has all the suitors; she abuses the guests, disobeys her father, beats her sister. Still, she wants admiration — in fact, she wants a husband; but she feels that her lack of self-command has become an insuperable obstacle to marriage. Such is her character, and such is the wrong of the parent, which has resulted in her exclusion from the Family, and condemned her, as every prospect would indicate, to an unwilling life of old-maidenhood.

Bianca, the second daughter, is not so graphically drawn; in general, she possesses a mild, sweet disposition, yet is capable of a decided display of will; she also has a taste for study and a desire for culture. Two native suitors are in a warm tournament for her favor; there is the old, wealthy Gremio — the typical scarecrow of youthful hearts beating with hot passion; there is also Hortensio, whose chief object is, seemingly, Bianca's money; but this he can get just as well, and afterwards does get, by marrying a rich widow. It is clear that to both these proposed alli-

ances is wanting the essential element of marriage, namely, reciprocal love; the maiden is adverse or indifferent. Now the third suitor appears — it is Lucentio, a man of proper age, of similar tastes, of great wealth and high social position. But these points are afterwards brought out fully; at present the supreme motive must be the tender passion — this must go before all other grounds. Lucentio sees the fair Bianca; enough — it is a case of love at first sight — it is the spontaneous impulse of the soul. Still, her modest behavior is here shown; and her desire to be in the company of her books and instruments is also expressed. The youth now deserts his studies — at least we hear no more of them; he appears to have neglected Aristotle and taken Ovid, in accordance with the hint of his keen-eyed servant; he becomes the thrall of Love. But that which stamps him as the triumphant suitor is her requital of his passion; thus the two become one in emotion, and the internal basis of the Family is laid in their hearts.

Here the Poet drops the theme for which he almost seems to have prepared the foundation, namely, the conflict between study and love. Lucentio totally abandons his course of learning; it engages his thoughts no more. But Shakespeare has not neglected to develop this collision in another drama. The entire of action of *Love's Labor's Lost* turns upon just such a conflict:

there it is shown how the most serious purposes of study and literary ambition are assailed and overcome by a visitation of the arrowed god.

Against the younger daughter, too, the father has committed an unintentional, yet very real wrong. He has declared that she shall not be given in marriage till the elder daughter has obtained a husband. Bianca's chances are thus brought to depend upon an external accident; indeed, she is made to suffer the consequences of her sister's shrewdish disposition. It is a palpable violation of the right of love — the parent becomes the obstacle; he must be circumvented. But this difficulty is soon obviated by the arrival of a suitor for Katharine; nevertheless, Baptista afterwards falls into another grievous offense of the same kind — he barters away the hand of his child for money; he is ready to subject love to gain. Hence comes the justification — nay, the necessity — of his deception. For the daughter's right is paramount in such a conflict, according to Shakespeare's ethical code, since she insists upon the true basis of the Family against the will of the parent. Thus the second wrong— that done to Bianca — is portrayed.

Such, in general, is the first movement of the drama — the preparation; it shows the double violation on the part of the parent, and also introduces the means for its removal; we behold the two suitors who will rescue the two daughters

and bring them into the domestic relation. To unfold the manner of this proceeding is the object of the second movement, to which we may now pass. There will be, henceforth, two distinct — almost separate — threads, namely, the groups around Bianca and around Katharine. The Comedy of Situation and the Comedy of Character here run alongside of each other, and finally intermingle in the solution.

II.

1. The first thread will exhibit the suit for the and of Bianca; the struggle of all the persons here will be to hoodwink the parent and to deceive each other. For this purpose three disguises are introduced, to which a fourth is afterwards added. It is a carnival of deception, in which everybody participates — appearance for a time controls the world. The action of this thread will be two-fold — the attempt to purchase the consent of the father, and the attempt to gain the love of the maiden.

The wealthy suitors bid, before Baptista, for the hand of his daughter in lively competition, since with him now the whole transaction is a matter of money. Herein his conduct becomes comic — such is his just retribution; he thinks that he is determining the affair himself, whereas he is a mere shadow, being cajoled by his own child, and being victimized by the disguises. For

the daughter on the one hand is secretly disposing of herself according to the right of love, and on the other hand he is deceived by the two supposed teachers, and by the pretended suitor, Tranio. His reward is just and logical; having wronged his child — formerly by his wanton prohibition, and at present by his mercenary action — he is truly not a parent, he is only an appearance; hence he is treated as an unreal mockery. For the gentle and dutiful Bianca engages herself and marries without his knowledge; though Lucentio also outbids his rival in the quantity of dower, that is a subordinate — indeed, insignificant — matter; the couple are clandestinely united by the priest, and the father is disregarded. When, in the end, he discovers that all his planning and chaffering have been to no purpose, and, in fact, absurd, he gets angry — but he has to submit. The comic element of his conduct is the pursuit of a phantom, which he takes to be reality; his punishment is to have his own nullity held up before his eyes.

But the main interest of this thread centers in the attempt of the disguised lovers to gain the good-will of the daughter. The first one is Lucentio, as a tutor, whose entrance into Baptista's family is due to the old beau, Gremio, who is thus entrapped into introducing and recommending his most dangerous rival — not without a promise, however, of furthering his own cause.

The second is Hortensio, as a musician, who is to give lessons on the lute. Now we witness the amusing conflict of disguises, in which everybody, to a greater or less extent, is led about by an illusive appearance. Both suitors employ the same means of deception, but never seem to suspect each other of their own deed. But through this fantastic haze the rational element still peers; the end is the true formation of the Family. Each lover has the right object in view, namely, to obtain the affection of Bianca, though this has to be reached through the secret mask. They thus tacitly recognize the right of choice; the maiden is ultimately to dispose of herself. The father has forced the deception upon himself by his wrong interference; it is not his favor which is the essential principle. For the Family is possible without the consent of the parent; and it is not his consent which can call it into existence. Lucentio and Hortensio, therefore, proceed directly to gain the favor of Bianca, which is the main and the true object; both employ the same means — a very good sign of its necessity and its effectiveness.

The two disguised teachers begin their instruction; they meet at the house of Baptista, where at once begins a struggle for preference. Each, under the cover of a lesson, makes a declaration of love to Bianca. The contest is lively and laughable, but the result of the wooing is that

Hortensio is rejected and Lucentio accepted. Reciprocal affection is now announced; the unity of emotion is not only attained, but acknowledged; thus the true pair are indicated. Hortensio watches closely his rival; he notes the favor of Bianca toward him; finally, he gives up the suit, and consoles himself with his rich widow. Thus the Disguise is deceived, and deceived by itself; the man in mask is victimized by a mask — he is the ridiculous dupe of his own deed. The fool cannot make the reflection that another may do just what he is doing. Such is the world before us — a wild masquerade of disguise. But the beauty of the action is that, in this giddy whirl of illusion, the rational element shows itself the master; the right thing is done in the end — the two who belong together come together. It is true that means are employed at which morality shakes its head; deception is met by deception; violence is countervailed by cunning — the Devil must be scorched in his own Hell-fire.

But Lucentio, having gained the consent of the daughter, wishes to make his case sure by meeting the requirements of the parent. He dresses up his adroit servant, Tranio, as himself, and sends him to bid against the old wealthy suitor, Gremio — this is the third disguise. Here, too, the cause of Lucentio is successful; thus he secures both sides — the assent of Baptista, and

the love of Bianca: while Gremio only seeks the former, and Hortensio the latter. He, therefore, fulfills the double requirement; his deed is complete; he cannot help but win. Such are the two struggles running along together through this part — Gremio and Tranio buying the father, Hortensio and Lucentio wooing the daughter. It has already been explained that the latter is the essential principle.

A fourth disguise is now introduced, the purpose of which is to complete the deception of old Baptista, the mercenary parent. He is somewhat suspicious, and demands that the promised dower be assured by the father of Lucentio, whose name is Vincentio, and who must, consequently, be produced in some way or other. A passing pedant, or school-master — a character upon whom Shakespeare delights to pour ridicule — is frightened into personating this Vincentio, who lives at Pisa. All is accomplished without detection; and Baptista is also deceived in respect to his bargain. He is the worst victim of the entire group, and he deserves his fate for his wanton violation of his daughter's right. The four disguises have now fulfilled their separate function. The persons whose ends were irrational and absurd have been foiled — their plans have been torn into shreds in the very process of realization; the suitors who sought marriage through other considerations than its true emo-

tional basis in reciprocal love are defeated; and the parent who does not recognize the same principle, is set aside in authority. We have now reached the end of this thread, which is somewhat complicated in its intrigue; everything is prepared for a revelation of the true state of affairs to the various individuals, for the play cannot stop till they are made to see the abortive result of their ends — the inherent consequence of their conduct. The truly comic character must be brought to comprehend, and must always be able to comprehend, its own folly; otherwise, there can be no solution.

2. It is now time to go back and pick up the second thread, which was temporarily dropped — that of Katharine and Petruchio. Comedy of Character, though in rough outlines, is now the principle; the external disguise is laid aside; the mask, in the case of Petruchio at least, is internal — is to be sought for in the mind. Katharine, as before stated, refuses all subordination in the Family and in society; to become a member of the Family, therefore — to be a wife — she has to be tamed; she has to be subsumed by force. Given her characacter, there is no avoiding the conclusion, for absolute caprice is her fundamental principle of conduct. Now comes Petruchio, who can be the rudest man in all Italy, who has endured in his own body the wildest buffets of the world. His

experience prepares him well for the task; he can meet caprice with caprice, and if need be, blow with blow. Money he declares to be his object in marrying, and he is not particular about the rest. This, however, is only a less important phase of his rude nature; it would be a great mistake to consider the leading trait of Petruchio to be avarice. The course of the drama will reveal the true impelling power of his conduct — it is the pleasure which he takes in taming just such a shrew by means of her own shrewishness. He thus has a tinge of the highest type of comic delineation — he is purposely comic, and takes delight in his own play. His method is clear and logical; he serves up her own character to her; his plan is retribution. As she acts with absolute caprice, he treats her with absolute caprice. He thus shows herself to herself — as it were, in a mirror — and makes her feel, even in her own body, what she really is. Her deeds, her treatment of others, and her character are thus thrust home to herself.

Were this rude spectacle brought before us for mere amusement, its barbarity would justly give offense. But there is a profound ethical element which is always felt, and which would reconcile us with the action of Petruchio if it were not carried to excess. As he is going to marry Katharine, and as she has openly defied parent and renounced submission in the Family, it becomes

the first necessity that she be subordinated in her new relation, which is also the Family. This she will not do herself; it must, then, be done by another. Ethical life demands that every human being belong to the domestic institution; even a shrew cannot be excepted; the law is universal.

The reason why Katharine is won is not as plain as it might be; no doubt she wants to have a husband, but this desire has not hitherto been strong enough to control her conduct. The ground of her yielding seems to be that she has now met her master in her own realm — a person whom she cannot affect in the least degree by her caprice. She storms, he laughs; she refuses, he takes her refusal as a caprice — like all her other words and acts; he keeps an imperturbable spirit in her wildest tossings — on no side can she pierce his humor and adroitness. Such a man she has not met; hitherto she has been able to put everybody to flight with a single volley. His treatment is to throw her into the world of caprice — of subjective arbitrariness. He disregards all ceremony; he violates all social requirements; he is just like Katharine, except that the picture is so magnified that its look startles even her. The parent, Baptista, previously so glad of the match, becomes alarmed, too, at his behavior. The wildest oddity is manifested by Petruchio during the marriage; then he hurries

out of the city to his country-place, where his caprice can reign supreme without danger of interference. He reduces her spirit by hunger; then he will not suffer her to have any sleep; and, what is worst of all, he sends off her new dress. No food, no rest, no fine clothes, are permitted in that capricious world. Finally, nature herself, the sun, the moon, the stars, are dragged in by his whimsicality — to which she must subject her opinion — and she is compelled to deny the existence of her very senses. This is the lowest point of submission — the shrew is now tamed; indeed, her individuality has been quite wiped out in the process.

Here the wrong of Petruchio is seen; he has succeeded so well that he has almost destroyed the basis for a true union between man and woman. His capricious behavior, however, he appears to put off when his end is attained; so much can be said in his favor. Still, the result is repulsive; it is not, at least, the ideal relation of marriage. The wife is not a slave; her subordination is to the Family as an institution rather than to the husband as an individual. She is entitled to her individuality as well as he; both are, however, to be subsumed under the higher principle — the institution — of which the man, it must be confessed, is as yet the head and representative. Therefore we are but partially reconciled with the outcome; Petruchio is not free

from a violation, and we feel that justice demands some taming for him, too. He belongs to the class of voluntary comic characters, since his end is known and willed by himself, and is really comic to himself. Katharine is, on the contrary, an involuntary comic character; she is the victim of a delusion — of a foible — the nature of which must be brought home to her by a foreign means.

Thus both the daughters, Bianca and Katharine, have landed in marriage. Each had an obstacle — the former in the will of a parent, the latter in her own disposition. The removal of the first, or external, obstacle is effected by deception through disguise; the removal of the second, or internal, obstacle is effected by retribution through caprice. This brings us to the end of the second movement of the drama.

III.

We have now reached the point where the Solution can be given, the object of which is to make the play clear to itself — to render the various characters conscious of what has been done. In order to round off the action into completeness, the deception of Baptista and others, the secret marriage of Bianca, the taming of Katharine, must be revealed.

1. The explosion takes place by the unexpected appearance of the real Vincentio, father

of Lucentio, upon the scene. He comes to pay a visit to his son, but he lights upon the Pedant disguised as himself. Here is clearly some knavery; then he further recognizes the servants, Tranio and Biondello, in their unwonted garments. All three try to maintain their disguise by audacious lying, and even by causing the arrest of the old gentleman. But the secret is out; Lucentio, the son, appears, acknowledges the whole transaction, and sues for forgiveness. He tells the story of the deception — love was the cause, which has already reached its full fruition in marriage. Baptista also is present, and sees that his consent has been wholly disregarded. Both parents are at first angry on account of the deception which has been practiced upon them, but the essential thing has been attained, and they have only to get into a good humor again. Such is the termination of the intrigue, whose center is Bianca; the suitors and the parent are brought to see their delusion, as well as to know the means of their humiliation.

2. But the main purport of this third movement is to show the result of Katharine's training, namely, the destruction of her foible — of her subjective delusion. A severe test is given; a wager is laid upon her disobedience. But she is completely altered in character; as wives, she and Bianca have, relatively at least, changed places; the one who was the most wild and un-

ruly now shows herself the most submissive and obedient. She easily wins the wager for her husband, and excites the surprise of the company.

But, not only is she ready to manifest her obedience, she is also able to state its grounds, and to enforce them with eloquence; thus she concludes by a long lecture on the relation of husband and wife, and the paramount duty of obedience on the part of the latter. Hence it is to be supposed that she is convinced, as well as subdued; to her conviction also she is capable of giving a theoretical statement. Her doctrine has never found many admirers among her own sex.

It will be seen that the element of Intrigue, of Situation, predominates in this play, and its instrumentality is Disguise. The Romanic origin and coloring are observable in the Italian names, scenery, location, manners — in its Italian form generally. But the Teutonic element of character also makes a beginning. It is, however, rude and simple; it does not show the fine and detailed portraiture which will hereafter be developed; there is a single, dominant trait without relief. The product is unripe and uncouth in some respects, yet at the bottom the procedure is true — the retribution of the deed is the fundamental principle. The conviction and the method of the Master thus peer out in his earliest works.

The present play is usually criticised as if

Katharine and Petruchio were its sole leading parts; this is a perversion if the preceding views are correct; the action rests more upon external disguise than upon character. Nor can the many historical questions which have sprung up in reference to this drama be discussed here. There has always been some tendency to ascribe its two different threads to different authors, but such an opinion, perhaps, only intends to lay stress upon the diversity already mentioned. Now, Shakespeare is capable of writing Comedy of Situation, as well as Comedy of Character; in fact, he employs both in nearly every one of his comedies. The recent results obtained from the application of the so-called metrical tests have not changed the state of the argument. But the question whether it was written — wholly, partially, or not at all — by Shakespeare, is a matter of minor importance; the play remains exactly the same; hence a just criticism of it, as a whole, could not be changed by changing its authorship. There it stands in the book, there it belongs, and there it will remain, for it is an organic link in that series called the works of William Shakespeare.

The play has connecting points with all the comedies of Shakespeare in language, incidents and character. On the whole, it connects most distinctly with *Comedy of Errors*, and in time of origin we should place it near that play. As to

persons, each play has a pair of sisters, and a pair of clowns as servants; in the characters generally there is a tendency to pairs. Adriana and Katharine are after the same pattern of the shrew; Luciana and Bianca are similar in gentleness by way of contrast to their sisters. Each play has a pedant introduced to perform a comic function, and make himself ridiculous. A certain rudeness is in both plays, shown not only in the scoldings, but the trouncings.

The plot is old. A story like that of the Induction runs back through the Occident into the Orient, being found in the Arabian Tales. The disguises of the play are usually traced to an Italian source, the *Suppositi* of Ariosto, translated by Gascoigne and acted in 1566. If this Italian play first introduced the element of Disguise, it had a vast influence upon the English Drama, and specially upon Shakespeare. An old English popular diversion was how to tame a shrew. Thus the three main incidents of the play were transmitted to the Poet by time. Finally, an old play which is on the same subject with nearly the same name, and which has come down to us, was the foundation of Shakespeare's work.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

The Pure Comedies of Shakespeare, at present under consideration, are those plays in which there is no tragic or serious thread, and in which there is found no transition to an ideal world in order to heal the conflicts of society. Everything takes place in the ordinary manner, and in the customary locality; the solid ground of reality is never abandoned; the mediation is effected within the same realm in which the struggle arose. Of this class *Twelfth Night* is, without doubt, the most perfect specimen. All the instrumentalities and forms of Comedy are most successfully employed in its action; not only Situation, but also Character, are here seen in their happiest application. There is introduced Natural Resemblance in its truest function; Disguise also appears as an indispensable element. Both Involuntary and Voluntary Comedy of Character have some of their most striking and complete representatives in the present drama. It will thus be seen to sweep quite the entire field of Pure Comedy; in it the Poet has combined all the essential means and effects which he employs in this department; it unites what is else-

where scattered through several plays. Because it thus makes use of all the comic instrumentalities which have been previously unfolded, it must also place them in their proper relation and subordination; to watch this procedure will be one of the main points of interest.

Nor is the style less perfect than the structure. It adapts itself with an absolute elasticity to the varying circumstances of the action, though almost the extremes of poetry and prose are touched in the wild, changing phases of the drama. Nowhere has the Poet given to his thoughts a more complete utterance, or expressed his emotions with a fairer, more delicate coloring than in the language of the group of elevated characters. Then we may turn to the mirthful element — it is a world of boundless humor; the earnest purposes of men seem dissolved in one continual round of jollity; the Comic Muse, in her broadest license, sways the hour. The scenes dance before us through all the hues of the rainbow, and with a rapidity that dazzles, and sometimes for a moment confuses, the mind, which is trying to follow the story through its many-tinted mazes. There is no stagnation — not even cessation — of movement; we are whirled through a labyrinth most bright — yet most intricate — in delight, yet in wonder at the prodigal display of humor and poetry. Still, there cannot be said to be any wanton excess,

any tropical overloading, of sweets; on the contrary, every part springs from the central thought; every detail grows out of the Whole. This is a main element of its perfect form; there is no straining after superfluous description, no amplification of an unrestrained fancy, but there is, at bottom, a logical rigidity which holds together its most diverse portions. The plastic sense, which carefully trims the wild outgrowth of a luxuriant imagination, is seen at work here on all sides, reducing even the caprices of humor into unity with the governing principle of the work.

We shall now follow the Poet through these manifold appearances, and try to grasp firmly the Protean shapes of the play till they reveal themselves in their fundamental form. First let us attempt to trace its general outlines. The ethical element in which the entire action moves is the Family, as is the case in most comedies. But here it is the Family manifested in one of its phases, namely, in the emotion which is the forerunner and condition of marriage. This is sexual love. But to the union of the lovers there must be some obstacle, and the chief peculiarity of the present drama is the nature and employment of this obstacle. It is only of one kind — the lack of a reciprocal attachment. Each loves the one who does not requite the affection, but who, in turn, is sighing for an-

other. There is no parent here who interposes his will to nullify the choice of his daughter; there is, in fact, no external obstruction of any kind — the sole difficulty is internal, is placed in the inclinations and feelings of the individual. The theme, therefore, is unrequited love — in its origin, in its conflicts, and in its final pacification; there is shown the passage from a fruitless and restless passion to the haven of repose in the Family. The necessity of the transition is absolute — it must take place, if not through the first choice, then through the second. But the other side is also present — some fail, through their own folly, to attain the desirable end. To state the matter in its most general form, the action moves from Love unrequited, with its various manifestations, to Love realized in marriage, or excluded from marriage — the different results springing from the logical nature of the different motives of the various characters.

The frame-work of the play will be best understood by ascertaining its movements, and then by analyzing each movement into its component threads, and, finally, by designating the individual characters of each thread. Thus we penetrate, not only the organization of the work, but we follow its development and mark its transitions. For the Whole is not so much a dead result as a process. Of the three movements, the first is the exposition of the theme;

unrequited love will be shown in two essential phases, each of which will be represented by a distinct group of persons. The second movement will portray the complications and conflicts between the manifold purposes of the characters; all the instrumentalities of Comedy are here introduced to bring the ends of the various individuals to their logical conclusion. To the two previous groups a new group is added. This furnishes means for the Solution, which is the third movement. In it the sources of deception are revealed; to all are brought home the results of their conduct — to some, success; to others, failure.

I.

We are, accordingly, to witness a pure comedy of love, in which the sole obstacle to love is love itself. Why and when is love comic? It starts as a fancy, a sudden caprice, an unaccountable inclination; it has no ground of being but itself. Notice that well-balanced, perhaps defiant individual; at one glance from a pair of eyes he is lost, he becomes pre-occupied, restless, self-forgetting. But in such a state he cannot remain, he is passing through the discipline of capricious love. Now this capricious love is comic, it is self-annulling, it perishes in its fulfillment, that is love as a caprice must perish, and become fixed in an institution, the Family. Love, as

settled, steady, domestic affection, is no longer capricious, no longer comic, or ought not to be. Thus it will be seen there are two kinds of love: the capricious and the institutional; between the two the comedy moves, beginning with the one, and ending with the other.

The essential fact, therefore, of the present comedy is mediation; it mediates that first flash of subjective caprice with the permanent, ethical element of love. It shows the discipline of fancy, as the Poet calls it — the sudden fantastic passion, which bubbles up from the unexplored ocean of the soul, nobody knows why or whence or whither — some bubbles to explode and vanish into nothingness, others to be wonderfully metamorphosed into the solidest fact of life. Moreover, the subjective caprice has its place in the order of things; it must begin, love will tolerate no other motive but love. If the incentive be money, fame, honor, it will be spurned; the second or ethical love is reached through the first or capricious love, which, therefore, as a starting-point has an infinite right, but as an ending-point, no right at all, and accordingly passes away in a comic evanishment. The Poet is now going to bring before us these two incentives to love: first, itself, and secondly, something else; each is unfolded in a distinct set of characters.

But even of this capricious love we may dis-

cern two phases, hints of which appear in the present play. That wonderful first love may be a mere passing fancy, tickled into a transitory existence by some external charm; or it may spring from some deep harmony of two natures, which at a glance become one forever — the everlasting kiss of two souls born for one another. A gleam of such a love possibly we may see flashing out of the depths of Viola's eyes when she looks upon the Duke, though at first it be without its counterpart in the man.

1. The first thread of the first movement is made up of three characters — the Duke, Viola, and Olivia — who, on account of their station in life, and still more on account of the purity and intensity of their passion, may be called the elevated group. They are all worried with a common difficulty — their love is unrequited. The Duke is introduced to us in the full glow of his ardor for Olivia; there is the feeling of restlessness, of changefulness in everything which he says and does; the air of the lorn, hapless lover looks out from every feature. In order to be rocked and soothed in his emotions, he wishes to have himself enveloped in an atmosphere of music; thus he experiences some allayment of that passion which can find no relief through fruition. Music is the utterance of the feelings; it, therefore, becomes, not only the solace, but the symbol, of the internal condition of the soul; its poetical

significance here should not be left unnoticed. But what is the cause of these passionate throes? The fair Olivia has refused to listen to his suit. Thus the play hurls us at once into its rapid action, and we hear the key-note which will resound through all its future harmony.

In fact, the speech of the Duke at the beginning of the play may be called the overture: —

> If music be the food of love, play on!

Still music alone will not satisfy, there is something else in his soul which cannot be lulled by sweet sound: —

> Enough, no more;
> 'Tis not so sweet now, as it was before.

Everything changes, drops in value, but the one thing, the indulgence in which brings the pain but also the pleasure. This is fancy, the caprice of love, which is the theme of the poem: —

> So full of shapes is fancy
> That it alone is high fantastical.

The reason which Olivia announces for her refusal is clearly a subterfuge. She says she is in mourning for a dead brother — which is a good ground for a little delay, but, when she adds that she intends continuing her sorrow for seven years, it is manifest that she is trying to get rid of an unwelcome suitor. She, too, is capricious;

the readiness with which she falls in love when the right one comes along shows that her heart is highly susceptible, yet it cannot admit the Duke. But from this rejection of his advances we must be careful not to draw any conclusion unfavorable to his character. In order to give some justification for Olivia's conduct, it has been maintained that the Duke is unworthy of her; that he resigns himself to a weak and unmanly extravagance in his passion; that, in fine, his love is really no love, but an idle indulgence of fancy and feeling. Thus, however, the symmetry of the work is destroyed, for he is rendered unfit for the hand of Viola, the true heroine of the play. But the language of the Poet certainly gives no foundation for such an opinion; indeed, it directly contravenes what can be shown to be his poetical creed. Love is spontaneous; it is a deep harmony of natures, beyond the ken of the understanding; and, hence, it is very likely to leap forth with fiery energy at first sight. It will not, and often cannot, give a reason — nay, it will frequently contradict and scout every rational consideration; it lies in the emotions, and refuses to be held accountable to intelligence. In a similar manner, dislikes are not to be controlled by logic. There is no use of seeking a reason — there is none. The Duke loves Olivia because he does; Olivia does not love the Duke because she does not; yet there is

no ground why they should not come together except the supreme ground. Love may be aided, but must never be controlled by external considerations; its purity is tainted when it yields to any foreign influence. This passion, therefore, is taken for granted by the Poet; it is the god who rules the world with an undisputed sway, and who will not suffer himself to render an account of his likes and dislikes to any superior.

Next comes Viola. She has been shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria, the Duke's dominion, and, as she supposes, has lost her brother by drowning. Thus she is left without her natural protector, but she will show ample ability to take care of herself. The separation here indicated must be noticed, for this brother will hereafter return and play an important part in the drama; he will introduce the element of Natural Resemblance. Viola, on the lonely shore, learns of the Duke and of his frutless affection; indeed, she has before heard her father mention his name; she resolves at once to enter his service, disguised as a page; what her purpose is she faintly hints. Already we must suppose that the tender passion has budded; Viola requires not even the presence of the Duke — the report of his virtues, and, especially, of his unreciprocated affection, has excited in her breast pity and love. The caprice of emotion is again triumphant; rumor is now sufficient to arouse the sleeping divinity.

Here we have the sole disguise of the play — a woman in the habit of a man. She moves among these groups of characters — deceiving them — causing them to run after illusions, and to pursue ends which cannot be realized. If anybody should now happen to fall in love with Viola, woeful is the mistake; the hot fervor is only for a mask; the passion dares not go further than the garments. Into all her relations with the people who surround her she introduces confusion, delusion, ridiculous action; they become comic through Situation, whose special instrumentality is here disguise. She will receive retribution — her deception will be punished by involving her in circumstances in which her true nature must be reversed.

Viola is soon observed to be deeply enamored of the Duke, which passion he cannot requite as sexual, since he takes her to be a boy. He is, however, her warm friend; but this is not enough — friendship will not answer her attachment. Clearly it is another case of unrequited love — the tie is not, and cannot be, reciprocal; though both are fired with the sacred flame, her male attire is in the way. Viola is now employed by the Duke to further his previous suit; thus, by a disguise, he is deceived into sending as intercessor the person most interested in defeating his purpose. She goes, but her object is clearly to break up the match, and she makes the wooing

of her master ridiculous by her pompous addresses to Olivia. Her own success must be her own despair; love is in conflict with duty, and carries off the palm with ease. Therefore she obeys the behest, but adroitly destroys the purport of her mission. She drops, however, her bombastic style of speech when she sees there is no danger from Olivia.

The third character may now be considered. It is Olivia, over whom has come a peculiar, yet very unexpected, change. No sooner has Viola appeared before the mourning beauty than the latter falls in love with the fair, beardless messenger. Her vows are at once forgotten, her cloistered life is abandoned, and her cold reserve is thawed in the rays of a new sun. She feels the rising passion; she resists for a moment — then she makes a complete surrender. The youth's perfections, with an invisible and subtle stealth, creep in at her eyes, as she herself states the process. She is aware of her inconstancy, and mildly blames fate for the act — we are not masters of ourselves; what is decreed must be. Thus she asserts the absolute supremacy of love — it cannot be withstood; it is destiny. Intelligence cannot control it; the sense of sight is too powerful: —

> "Mine eye is too great a flatterer for my mind."

It is another example of Amor's wild caprice. Most persons would think that the Duke had

every advantage over Viola as a suitor, yet the calm and discreet Olivia is captured by the smooth and rubious lip, by the small, shrill, piping voice of one of her own sex. Let those who try to find a reason for her rejection of the Duke in his want of manliness reflect upon this sudden choice, and then read her actual opinion of him: —

> "Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
> Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
> In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant,
> And in dimension, and in the shape of nature
> A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him" —

Which is reason enough for sending him off, notwithstanding his many worthy qualities. Love is going to be ruled by itself, and only by itself.

Olivia also is the victim of disguise — she is really in love with the male attire which Viola has on. Her passion is comic in the highest degree, since it is directed towards a person of the same sex; its object is a phantom, a delusion. Love is based upon difference of sex between the individuals, while friendship is the emotion of like sexes. Thus not only the Duke but also Olivia are deceived by the disguise of Viola, though in opposite manners; both are misled into a state of feeling incongruous and inconsistent with their true relation to the imaginary youth. The same conclusion must again be drawn concerning Olivia — it is another case

of unrequited love. The sympathetic remark of Viola, who is in a similar condition, and therefore appreciates the torment, contains a truth the force of which none will deny: —

> "Poor lady, she were better love a dream."

Such is the group of elevated characters. All three are, essentially, in the same state of emotion; each one loves, but does not obtain a requital of that love; they fall asunder in their inclinations. The interest now lies in witnessing the means and method whereby this difficulty will be solved. The knot is well stated by Viola: —

> — "My master loves her dearly;
> And I poor monster fond as much on him,
> As she mistaken seems to dote on me."

Such is the preparation as manifested in this group of persons. It is to be observed that their affection is genuine, spontaneous, chaste; there is no ulterior motive — as money, rank, or social position — that taints the purity of their passion. Nor is there any great inequality between them, which might degrade, or render incongruous, the marriage relation. Though of similar culture, character, intelligence, and station in life, they still differ in their preferences; given their external surroundings, their love springs up en-

tirely of its own accord — it is wholly internal, self-impelled, self-determining. No reason can be shown why there should not be a requital in each case, except the one supreme reason — want of the emotional element. This is the triumphant caprice of love, whose authority the Poet makes absolute.

Though these characters are alike in the one principle, they reveal different manifestations of its power. The Duke is the man of the company, and when the man gives himself up wholly to caprice of love, he enters the realm where the other sex holds the mastery. The result is, the Duke is the victim of both the women, he falls a prey to Olivia's caprice, and to Viola's artifice. He is clearly out of his sphere, though neither weak nor wicked; a man of authority in the State and of valor in battle, he cannot cope in his present field with his two adversaries. The women also have shown a decided difference in character. Olivia has an executive head, rules her own household, is a strong woman, yet capricious; she will have no master, not even the Duke; the result is, her caprice is served up to her, in a most capricious way when she gets her husband. But Viola's bent is the opposite; she pities the unrequited love of the Duke, even in the distance when she but hears of it. Out of this sympathy flows her resolve to mediate it; the conflict which Olivia has caused, she will harmonize through her

love. Thus from the start her disposition is mediatorial, which is not that of Olivia; hence she is the chosen mediatrix of the play. For this reason she assumes her disguise; still she has many scruples of conscience about it: "Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness." So the Poet in her has introduced a character who is averse to her means—a state of mind which we do not notice in Portia and Rosalind, for instance, who also put on men's apparel to work out their ends. Is this an echo of Shakespeare himself undergoing certain moral changes? Moreover Viola is punished for her disguise; in the garb of a man she is forced to be a man and to fight—which gives her trouble enough. Still she is truly the mediatorial character of the play, the one who gives herself to mediate the conflicts of others, though this self-offering be through the caprice of love. The result is that she is rewarded, though punished too; she, and she alone of the three, obtains the first prize of her fancy; for "she toòk a fancy to the Duke," as we still speak in common English, with a Shakespearian meaning in the phrase.

This fancy is the comic element in these characters; otherwise they have nothing inherently in them which can be called comic to any great degree. But the situation may become decidedly comic; this is the case, at present, by means of the disguise of Viola. She throws everything into confusion; renders the purposes and the passions

of the others absurd; makes them the sport of an illusion. The pang of true love unrequited is no laughing matter, even for outsiders—not to mention him who has the iron in his body; but, when it is all for nothing, when the sighs and groans are expended upon a phantom, then it is provocative of the keenest mirth. This thread, therefore, exhibits throughout Comedy of Situation, and its instrumentality is Disguise. There is nothing in the character of these persons which is very ridiculous; in fact, their portraits are not minutely drawn, for a detailed delineation of their personal peculiarities is not intended—they are mainly representatives of one principle in three different phases. They fall into a comic entanglement through an external means, and not through any fault of their own.

It will also be noticed that these persons speak in elevated language, and with the utmost refinement of thought and feeling. Their utterances are often highly metaphorical; an atmosphere of the imagination surrounds their movements; their words fall naturally into harmony and meter. The ethereal, poetic element is that in which they move; grossness, sensuality, buffoonery, are banished from their natures; they are always held in a realm of ideal beauty and delicacy. Their rank is high; their culture is proportionate to their position; their intelligence will not suffer them to be victimized by mental delusions and

oddities which might reduce them to the level of comic characters. This employment of metrical and other poetical effects is one of the most striking indications of a conscious method on the part of the Dramatist. Such is the first group of persons, who are naturally placed together, on account of common traits, principles, refinement, and social rank.

2. Now comes the second thread of the action, which furnishes the most emphatic contrast, and, at the same time, similarity, to the preceding thread. Love is still the theme, but it no longer appears in its former purity; it is reduced to a means, and is not the supreme end to which the individual sacrifices himself; it is subordinated to an ulterior motive. Thus it is degraded and trampled into the dust, but it avenges itself by turning its abusers into ridicule and destroying their purposes. But also it is now to be manifested in all its possible incongruity; differences in rank, social position, culture, intelligence, enter as elements to broaden the comic outlines. It will thus be seen that love is here pulled down from the lofty ideal position which it has just occupied, and is reduced to the prosaic coarseness and reality of low life, of selfish appetite. From the mistress it becomes the slave. The language also adapts itself most happily to the altered condition of things; the change of form follows the change of thought. The words drop into the un-

measured gait of prose; it is, too, the prose of the sensual, vulgar class of society. Such is the jolly set of persons who constitute Olivia's household; without misrepresentation, it may be termed the low group of characters.

But here also the relation to the preceding thread must not be omitted. It was said that the theme is still love; indeed, it is still unrequited love. The same fundamental note is struck; there is a deep, inner concord, though to the ear the melody be so different. The circumstances and the characters now change wholly; it is subjective delusion which takes control of the action; the deception has become internal and is no longer external. The individual is shown to be the victim of his own folly — is made to pursue his own absurd and irrational ends. Hence Comedy of Character more decidedly enters at this point — we leave the world of Disguise, in which the difficulty sprung from the clothing of the individual, and pass to the inner realm, in which the difficulty springs from a mask in the brain.

Of this group the first person who is to be brought to our notice is Sir Andrew Aguecheek. He also is a suitor for the hand of Olivia, and is spending his money freely for that purpose. He is not without social rank, nor has he lacked opportunities for culture. But his purpose is absurd; his wooing is a delusion, which he himself ought to understand. He is, however, a

fool — a veritable simpleton — who is unable to penetrate the most obvious deceit practiced upon himself. He is also inclined to debauchery, which inclination has been well cultivated in his present surroundings. Besides, he is a coward, but a coward who has the egotism of deeming himself courageous. To these qualities is added an ungainliness which almost amounts to deformity. Such are some of the incongruities which the poet has heaped upon his proposed suit. That such a clown — without intelligence, without decent habits, without personal beauty, without manhood — should entertain the idea of wooing Olivia, makes him comic, and shows that he is controlled by an illusion of his own fancy. But that which caps his absurdities, and causes him to be a fit subject for retribution, is his impure motive; his hope is to redeem a fortune spent in folly, by a wealthy marriage. Thus his love is no love, for it is degraded to a means. It is no disguise which deceives him; the deception lies in his own mind. Still, he is in earnest in the pursuit of his scheme; he really seems to think, or can, at least, be deluded into thinking, that he will obtain the hand of the rich and noble heiress. He is thus an example of Involuntary Comedy of Character. That his passion is not reciprocated by Olivia has been already implied — in fact, it seems quite unknown to her.

The second person of this group, with an un-

requited love for Olivia, is Malvolio. He is her servant, hence his station in life is lower than that of Sir Andrew; he has, however, a very solid basis of character, which is wanting to the latter. Malvolio is severe in morals, rigid in the observance of his duty, precise in the formalities of his office — in fine, an excellent steward. But this little authority is for him the world, of which he is the god; self-love is thus his disease, as his mistress says. He is so completely absorbed in his limits that he has no sense of humor, or any delight in amusing relaxation. Such a man is certain, some time or other, to fall a victim to his own narrowness. He who does not see his limitations will have them brought home to himself by some external power. In humor the individual notes and laughs at the ridiculous side, and, perhaps the weakness of what may be the strongest and deepest principle within his breast. Still, his sincerity and earnestness need not be in the least tainted by his humorous insight. Indeed, the complete man must see the finite phases of his own manners, of his own convictions, of his own character. Malvolio, sick with egotism, fails to comprehend these limitations; he is, therefore, just the person to fall into a mistake about his true station; the confidence which Olivia reposes in him as a servant he regards, or is easily deluded into regarding, as a manifestation of the tender passion. Nor must the main ground of

his punishment be forgotten — his love is not pure; he desires to marry Olivia for position and authority — as is clearly seen when he soliloquizes under the tickling excitement of Maria's forged letter.

Both Malvolio and Aguecheek, notwithstanding their different characters, have the same fundamental relation to the play — each represents a phase of unrequited love. Both, too, are serious in the pursuit of their ends, and the delusions of both are mental; hence both are types of the involuntary comic character. Their purposes are utterly chimerical and absurd; the incongruity of what they are and what they seek is felt from the start. Also, their love is not genuine — is not an end to itself — though this defect is manifested in different ways. Both are rational, but their objects are irrational. Such must be the happy mean in the true portrayal of the comic individual.

The other persons of this thread are, mainly, instruments for nursing the delusions of these two men, and for bringing their infatuation to its necessary conclusion. Here we first come upon Sir Toby Belch — without doubt the most comic portrait in the play. If a generalization were made in order to express the main principle of his character, it would perhaps be — love of fun. All the earnest objects of life are dissolved in his absorbing passion for merriment. Not only is

he comic himself, but he tries to make those who are brought into relation with him comic. He fools Aguecheek in part for the good cheer which is purchased with the latter's money, but chiefly for the delight in seeing him follow a chimerical object. Malvolio's absurd delusions, and the tricks which punish them, are to be traced, directly or indirectly, to Sir Toby. He makes the comedy, and makes it for his own amusement. He is the center around which the merry group turns, though he is not always its most active member; the sport is brought about through him, or for him. He is, to a certain extent, both author and audience; he helps make the fun, and laughs at it, too. He has one strong, predominating appetite — love of drink. This also is in harmony with his character; it increases his jollity, hence he must have his dram; still, his potations are not the cause, but rather the consequence of his jovial nature. The hilarious condition destroys all the earnest purposes of life; a man is dissolved into a laugh; care and sorrow, as well as business and duty take their flight; the individual lives only to be naught, and ultimately becomes naught by sacrificing life itself to his appetite. Sir Toby, having cast to the winds serious activity of every kind, very naturally takes another step — he tries to destroy the serious activity of those around him. Hence comes his delight in tricking people, in setting

somebody on the track of a visionary scheme. But his end, too, is ridiculous and absurd, for he seeks to make the world ridiculous and absurd; he must be included in the accomplishment of his own purpose. Still, he is not the victim of a deception, or even of a delusion; he is well aware of the nature of his doings, and also wills their absurdity. It can thus be seen that he belongs to the highest type of Comedy of Character — the voluntary.

It was said above that the relation of Sir Toby to this group was that of an instrument to bring to a natural conclusion the foolish designs of Aguecheek and Malvolio; but still deeper is his own absurd principle, which also has to be brought to a fitting termination, as will be shown hereafter. Besides himself, there are other instruments of this same purpose collected around him. Of these the cunning little Maria is the most noteworthy. She, too, likes fun, but her main object is to win Sir Toby. She accomplishes her purpose in the most skillful manner; she reaches him through his controlling principle — love of merriment. All her thoughts are bent upon contributing to his amusement. She is in collusion with the revelers, though she tries to keep their wild orgies within limits; her scheme of securing Sir Toby is seen through early in the play by the Clown. In the end she succeeds, for she holds in her hands the leading-strings of Sir Toby's

nature; she moves the sport which controls him. He thus takes a direction opposite to that of Malvolio and Aguecheek; he descends from his rank and marries a servant girl. Fabian joins the group later; he adds to the loudness of the laugh, and keenly relishes the fun. His function is not important — it is apparently to increase the number of the revelers; a large company seems merrier than a few scattered persons.

The Clown, too, must be classed in this group, though he sustains a general relation to the whole of the play. His main duty is to reflect the conduct of all the characters and to exhibit, in sly sallies, their weakness and folly. His thrusts reach everybody; Olivia, the Duke, the revelers are mirrored and criticised in his disguised satire. Often, however, he merely seeks to divert, and "observes the mood on whom he jests" — sometimes humorous, yet sometimes sympathetic. He is fully conscious of his purpose, and repeatedly intimates that it requires a wise man to play his part; the same point is noticed by Viola, in whose mouth the Poet seems to put his view of the function of the Fool. The earnest ends of the elevated characters must be shown by him in their inadequacy and finitude; at his glance they manifest their limitations; he is, therefore, the embodiment of humor, though he may have himself serious purposes beneath his merriest jests.

He belongs to Voluntary Comedy of Character, since he both knows and wills his comic action.

II.

Such is the organization of the various elements in the first movement of the play; we next can pass to witness them in action, in complication, in conflict. This will bring us to the second movement, for which ample preparation has now been made. The previous threads will be continued, but another one will be added — that of Sebastian and his friend, Antonio. Sebastian is Viola's brother, whom she exactly resembles in her disguise. Thus a new comic instrumentality belonging to Comedy of Situation is introduced, and into the former complications is brought a deeper intricacy. This new principle is what has been hitherto called Natural Resemblance. But Viola thinks that her brother was lost in the shipwreck; hence the difficulties caused by his disappearance lie beyond her knowledge. Up to this point she has held the key of the situation; she is aware that it is her disguise which causes the mistakes and confusion in which the others are involved. She could, therefore, easily solve the difficulty by simply removing its cause. This she will not do; and now a power enters which draws her into the meshes also, for this power lies beyond the horizon of her consciousness. She becomes complicated in the net-work of mis-

takes by the unexpected appearance of her brother; she is taken for him, and he is taken for her, yet neither is aware of the source of the trouble. It is manifest that no personage of the drama has now the means of solution in his own hand; the action is placed out of the reach of the conscious purpose of everybody. Still, the whole movement must rush on to its harmonious conclusion; the world of entanglement and error will disappear; man cannot rest forever in delusion.

It is at this point that we see entering the action a hand which we shall often notice in Shakespeare's comedies; a leading, governing hand, unknown, but not unfelt by the other characters; it is a masked hand, too, masking in some little fortuitous occurrence. Whose is it? That of Providence, we must think, who is, or ought to be also a character in these plays, if they offer a complete semblance of human life. What is he doing? Giving to these people what their deed is; he furnishes them now with the outer world of Accident, in correspondence with their own inner world of Caprice. Sebastian appears, that is all; the confusion and discord are driven to their height; nature has apparently dropped cause and effect, and become just as capricious as these capricious people. They are served up to themselves, are compelled to live in their own world, and that is the beginning of the end. This

second movement, will, accordingly, show the discipline of caprice, how it undoes itself and is eliminated.

1. The first thread consisting of the genteel group, may now be glanced at, though its importance is much diminished in this part. The same theme is continued, which, as before stated, is unrequited love, and is pushed to the point of complete separation. The Duke still persists in his suit for the hand of Olivia, employing Viola in the delicate business; but he is always repelled. The glow and purity of his passion are portrayed in the warmest colors; still, it avails naught. Viola also is consumed with her secret flame; she talks with the Duke and makes a disguised confession of her own state, which, however, he does not seem to understand. This scene, in which the two unrequited lovers give expression to their feelings, is one of the most perfect gems to be found in Shakespeare; both man and woman here utter their most intense emotions in reference to a hopeless affection. But Viola, when she discovers that Olivia is in love with her, feels deeply conscience-stricken; she sees the wickedness of disguise; she has been the means of exciting in another breast the same passion which is causing her so much tribulation. It is this sympathetic instinct which gives her all the gentleness and delicacy of womanhood, notwithstanding her bold actions; moreover, her end is

the true unity in the family — the highest principle of her sex. Thus her daring adds to her nobleness; she will be rewarded for her devotion, but punished for her disguise. Olivia also keeps up her infatuation for the supposed youth, and carries it to the most unreserved declaration of love. Her overtures are, of course, rejected. The three — Viola, Olivia, and the Duke — are thus driven asunder, but the means for uniting them has been already introduced, and is hovering in the distance.

This unrequited love has to be mediated in some way; it cannot remain a permanent factor, else were the Family destroyed. Caprice has its right as before stated, the right of beginning love, but it must be elevated and transformed into the domestic institution, which is its end. But it is caprice now which both refuses and is refused, especially in the case of Olivia; surely it is disciplining itself out of itself. But to this internal caprice of the individual will be added the external caprice of the world, or Accident, when all this realm of fancy will pass away like a dream.

2. Of this second movement, however, the second thread is, by all means, the most fully portrayed, and the most important; it has, as its moving principle, Sir Toby and his group of merry-makers. They are gathered in the household of Olivia, who also is not without a love of fun, as is shown by her retention of a clown, and

her reproof of Malvolio. It is the hilarious world — the occupation of life is concentrated in the pursuit of amusement. There are, usually, several of them together; the loud laugh rings out in chorus; they live in the atmosphere of song, mirth, and revelry. The chief caterer for them is Maria, who has, at the same time, her own secret object in view. There will be served up for their delectation two main comic incidents, which will run along side by side through this entire movement. These are the tricking of Malvolio and the duel of Aguecheek. Each of the dupes has a delusion; the delusion is nourished till it drives to excess, and then leads to cure. Let us first take up the case of Malvolio, and trace it through its various stages till he is incarcerated as a madman. For this is the penalty of his act; to woo Olivia was a crazy deed.

(*a.*) The merry-makers are having a wild carousal in one of the rooms of Olivia's mansion; Maria furnishes the wine for the debauch. In drink, all the sober activities of life are drowned; man dissolves into humor, and resigns himself wholly to the exhilaration of sensual indulgence. Then follows the song, which is about the absent mistress, and whose content is love, though of the less ideal type. The enjoyment turns into a mad carnival of frolic; the singing becomes a Bacchanalian bellowing, which rouses the house. The alert Maria tries to restrain them, but her

warning is disregarded; here comes the rigid Malvolio, the enemy of the revelers. He berates them, threatens to turn them out of doors, and Maria herself receives a menace. Thus there arises a conflict between the merry-makers and the steward — between hilarity and austerity. The former will seek to requite Malvolio after their own fashion, by fooling him and making him a subject of unbounded mirth; for no harmful punishment can be inflicted upon him in consistency with his and their character; he is only to be laughed at.

Maria will be the instrument; she possesses the strength of will and the persistent purpose, which are somewhat wanting to the jolly company relaxed in fun and drink. Besides, she has good reasons for bearing a deep grudge against the steward — he has reproved her, he has threatened her, and has partially displaced her in the confidence of Olivia. Now, this wily waiting-maid has carefully observed his character, and discovered his weakness. Under a sober and puritanical demeanor she has found the time-server; but, above all, she has discerned in him the self-inflated egotist, who imagines that every woman who happens to look on him is in love with him. Upon this basis she works; an obscure epistle is enough to set him crazy; she succeeds completely in making him believe that his mistress entertains a deep passion for his person. Excessive

self-love leads to such a delusion; vanity brings its victim to think that the world admires him as much as he admires himself.

But her own purpose must not be forgotten — it is to win Sir Toby. She subserves his amusement, hence he must be placed in a position to see the sport. With him are the merry-makers, whose main duty is now to enjoy the fun; they are all concealed, so as to witness the success of the trick; their malice adds to its piquancy. They are thus the audience of Maria, which must give the cue of laughter to the real audience. The letter is written; Malvolio's imagination is excited by it to the most ridiculous dreaming; its ambiguous expressions he interprets in his own favor without any hesitation. Enough; his vanity is pampered to such a degree that he pursues a chimerical end with a pertinacity which borders on madness. Especially does he menace in his reveries his future relative, Sir Toby, and the jolly company, all of whom are furtively listening with a malicious merriment.

To complete his act of folly, he next appears before Olivia in a costume which she abominates — cross-gartered and in yellow stockings. He found this suggestion also in the letter. He smirks, and fawns, and cites from the epistle; Olivia is amazed, though she has been prepared by Maria, who had told her he had gone crazy; her conclusion also is that "this is very midsum-

mer madness." Malvolio is now handed over to the torment of his enemies, the revelers, who have no longer any obstacle to their revenge. He is treated like a madman; Sir Toby addresses the Devil in him — then orders him to be put in a dark room and bound. The Clown, too, feigns the curate, who also seeks to cast out the fiend. Their object is to make the deluded victim himself believe that he is mad, and so he is confounded by all sorts of mad things which are told him. He begs for release, but there is no help. The character of this retribution is manifest — Malvolio's end was absurd, though he remains rational to the last; it was a crazy thought to mistake Olivia's confidence in a servant for love. He is, therefore, treated to his own action — the group of merry-makers brings home to him the inherent nature of his deed.

(*b.*) The other leading incident of this second thread is the duel of Aguecheek, who is possessed of a delusion which makes him a fit subject for trickery and sport. He also is one of the suitors of Olivia; he has been doubtful of success all along, but the encouragement of Sir Toby has kept up his spirits. He has observed, at a distance, how readily Olivia grants her favors to the disguised Viola (Cesario); now he is thoroughly disheartened, and he is going to leave at once. But his delusion is that he possesses courage; hence a challenge sent to his supposed rival is the

means for making him remain. Olivia, too, will thus be won, it is argued, as the report of valor is all-prevailing with woman. Off he goes to write the challenge. Now, the comic force of this incident lies in the fact that both are not fighters. Sir Andrew is a coward and Cesario is a woman. They are thus placed in a situation which makes their action ridiculous — they are forced to appear what they are not, and cannot be, and everybody knows of the incongruity. The contradiction is attempted to be carried out, though the duel means that life is subordinate to honor, which principle neither possesses.

The combatants are brought together; the scheme of the merry-makers is to cause each one to believe that his opponent is just what he is not, namely, a man of courage. Thus both are frightened at an unreal goblin, and a comic retribution has visited their false pretensions. For each is making some untrue claim — the one through disguise of character, and the other through disguise of sex. Aguecheek pretends to possess valor; he is forced to show it, or reveal his natural cowardice. He started the duel by appealing to what he had not — the nullity of his purpose is fully shown. On the other hand, Viola meets with a punishment; she has taken the garb of a man — she must assume the responsibility of a man. She learns that disguise is dangerous; beneath her male attire sex and character are com-

pelled to appear; deception cannot be permanent. The incongruity between her outward appearance and her real nature is the comic element; her plan nullifies itself. The Poet has here punished Disguise, and he will continue to involve Viola in complications till she is compelled to reveal herself.

3. With the interruption of the duel the third thread is introduced, and with it a new principle of entanglement. Resemblance is now the source of error, and throws everything into a new confusion. Just when the duel is about to transpire, Antonio comes along and takes Viola for Sebastian; he interferes to protect his friend, and the foes are parted. But Antonio, who is the enemy of the State, is soon removed by officers, who arrest him. The duel then must be repeated, for Aguecheek is easily misled a second time by his foible. He seeks out Viola again; he rushes up to strike her, but it is Sebastian now — a man; this man strikes back, and seems ready to fight the whole group of merry-makers. Thus the deceivers are deceived by the similitude — the jolly company is itself victimized. But the greatest mistake is that of Olivia, who enters just at the critical moment, takes her supposed lover away, and, after many caresses, brings the priest and marries the stranger on the spot. Well may Sebastian think that this world is a dream, and find it impossible to reconcile his senses with his un-

derstanding. All are involved in one common delusion—the merry group, the genteel group, and the new-comers. No single individual has now the means of untying the knot, or a knowledge of the cause of the difficulty; an external power seems to be determining the destiny of everybody according to some hidden caprice. But the rational nature of man will not repose in an irrational maze; it will push him to discover the source of the trouble, and to disperse the obscurity. So we are ready for a rapid unwinding of the clew; in other words, the Solution can now be given.

III.

This is the third movement, which will clear up the world of delusion. Both kinds of deception, the external and the internal, will be brought to day-light; the necessary outcome of the ends of of the various persons will be manifest, even to these persons themselves—that is, the play, which has hitherto been plain enough to the audience, will now explain itself to itself, and thus round off its action to completeness.

1. To begin with the genteel group, we observe that its difficulty springs from a disguise and a resemblance, both of which must now be revealed. Antonio, friend of Sebastian, is brought a prisoner before the Duke; he there sees Viola, and at once claims fellowship, which claim she of

course denies. Then Olivia appears and claims marriage, which relation also Viola denies. But the fact is, seemingly, proved against her by the best possible witness, namely, the officiating priest. Poor Viola has indeed found out that disguises are dangerous; she is even threatened with death by the angry Duke. But here comes Sebastian, her brother; the two are brought side by side — at once the resemblance is discovered. Lastly, Viola reveals her assumed attire — all the mysterious events of the drama now become transparent; everything is clear to everybody. The two comic instrumentalities — Natural Resemblance and Disguise — have fulfilled their function.

But the result is awaited for with breathless attention. What will be the outcome of this triple unrequited love? Some one must bend or break; all cannot be satisfied. It is a surprising, and to a few, perhaps, a shocking, incident — both the Duke and Olivia change individuals on the spot; Viola alone obtains the first reward of love. The Duke readily shifts his affection to his disguised page; he is right; he must find requital and come to repose; he cannot forever be torn to pieces by his furious passion. Olivia transfers her heart with equal readiness to the brother; she is right also; hitherto she loved a dream, for which a reality is now substituted; she would indeed be a fool to prefer shadow to substance. The change of persons must result from unre-

quited love; devotion to the one individual is beautiful and noble, but devotion to the Family is the higher principle. The transfer of love, therefore, must be made in such a case; the institution of marriage cannot be destroyed by a single fruitless passion. In effecting the change the question of time would seem to be of some importance, though Shakespeare repeatedly makes it very sudden. Such is the solution of this grand problem of love unrequited, yet pure. The essential element is the reciprocal emotion, which, if the first person will not grant, the second person must be sought, for the Family — the great end and fruition of the sexual relation — demands mutuality of devotion and affection.

2. Passing to the low characters, we observe that their ends are made to vanish into nothing before their very eyes, and they are punished in addition. Aguecheek and Malvolio have both suffered in body, besides losing their suit; their love, though unrequited, was impure, being determined by motives alien to its nature; indeed, it was not love at all. Their object was absurd and nugatory from the beginning; the absurdity is now realized in the form of ridiculous failure. Sir Toby, too, is caught on his weak side; his insatiate love of jollity has forced him to become the thrall of the person who can furnish sport with the greatest success — this is the astute little

witch, Maria, whom he now marries. He has already declared his subjection and the ground of it, when she wheedles Malvolio with the forged letter; in his exultation he says, "I could marry this wench for this device," and he urges her, "set thy foot upon my neck," in manifest token of submission. So his absurd end, too, has brought along its penalty. "And thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," as the Clown says, applying the principle of retribution to Malvolio — which principle, however, is of general application.

As we said in the beginning, this play is the richest and completest product of Shakespeare's Muse within the realm of Pure Comedy. The stiff conventionality, as well as the crude exaggeration of his earlier figures are no longer seen; character in its fullness, symmetry and completeness is manifest in every person. But the Romanic element is still here, with its coloring, with its locality, even with its names; along side of it, too, is found the Teutonic element, with its peculiarities. To speak more definitely, the one group seems Italian, the other English. But the two sides do not fall asunder, as is the tendency in some of the Poet's works; on the contrary, both are blended together in a perfect and harmonious unity. Movement and characterization could not be more completely transfused in one action. Rapidity does not make it super-

ficial; abundance does not make it heavy. Thus the elements of his comic genius now reach their happiest combination. Moreover, this play sums up and includes all the essential principles of his previous comedies, both as regards Situation and Character. It has Natural Resemblance, which was found to be the sole instrumentality of *Comedy of Errors.* It has also Disguise, which was stated to be the chief instrumentality in *Taming of the Shrew.* It has, too, the caprice of love, which, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, we find symbolized in the effects of the drop squeezed upon the eyelids of the lovers; in the present play the symbolism is not used, the passion is portrayed in its purely psychological form. The play has also the two leading phases of Comedy of Character — the voluntary and involuntary. Thus the arch of Pure Comedy is completely spanned — its possible forms are exhausted. Still, there may be many different kinds of collisions in which one or more of these instrumentalities can be employed.

If we compare incidents and characters, we find that this play has points of connection with nearly every drama of Shakespeare. The disguise of the woman, as we see in the case of Viola, belongs to most of the Poet's comedies. Sir Toby Belch with his merry company is repeated substantially in Falstaff and the East-cheap group. The sudden change of the Duke

from Olivia to Viola through the pressure of unrequited love, reminds the reader of the sudden change of Romeo from Rosaline to Juliet. All these lovers too, have their analogues more or less complete in other plays. Yet the characters are different, though they be traced back to the common well-head. How varied the music, even if the theme be the same!

This is one of the few plays of Shakespeare, the date of which is moderately well established by documentary evidence, which, we believe, has not yet been impugned. John Manningham, a barrister of the Middle Temple, makes an entry in his diary under the date of Feb. 2nd, 1602. "At our feast we had a play called Twelfth Night or What You Will. Much like the Comedy of Errors, or Menechmi of Plautus; but most like and near to that in Italian called Inganni." This date, however, secures us only in one direction; how long before the feast mentioned it had been written, is not known; but probably not long.

Very interesting is the fact that Manningham knew the historic derivation of the play from its Latin and Italian sources, as we see by the above extract. It shows that the origins of the English theater were studied and compared by men of education in the time of Shakespeare. The plot or intrigue of Twelfth Night descended to the Poet, through a long line of works more

or less akin, from antiquity; it passed into the Italian drama and novel (Bandello); thence into the French (Belleforest) and English (Barnaby Rich) story-tellers; through the last one it probably reached Shakespeare. To build the legend for the poet requires many ages and nations; one may discern the distinctive portions contributed by the peoples through which it has passed. The Roman and the Greek sported in mistaken identity with a child's delight; the Italian wove into the story the caprice of love; the Englishman added character and humor — in the present play he invented Sir Toby and the merry set — then he transformed and united all these elements into a new poetic organism. Shakespeare finds his pre-suppositions not merely in the legends of his own people, but of his race.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

There is more philological fun in this play than in any other work of Shakespeare. Language, the outer garment of thought, is distorted and torn, in order to make a comic drapery suitable to the characters. Most of the important persons in *Merry Wives* have some linguistic peculiarity, more or less pronounced; Sir John himself sets off the same tendency by turning critic of his mother tongue. Two foreigners, a Frenchman and a Welchman, are introduced, talking in a dialect which may well be able "to fright English out of his wits." In a different manner, Mrs. Quickly, though a native, "hacks our English" to very shreds. Ancient Pistol is full of theatrical bombast; Corporal Nym is overmastered by his one word, "humors;" mine Host of the Garter has his characteristic appellative, "bully rook." Linguistic oddities Shakespeare has employed elsewhere, but never so many as in the present instance; the play is a curiosity of perverted human speech. In consonance with the spirit of the entire drama, language itself is turned into a caricature of language, and the peo-

ple speak not merely their own character, but their own jargon. The result is, the piece, though humorous, is prose and must be written in prose. With a true instinct, and in perfect accord with the subject, the poet has employed less verse than in any other of his works. The minimum of meter and maximum of caricature very properly go together.

Usually, though not always in Shakespeare's comedies, prose is spoken by the characters with English names, and is reserved for burlesque and rollicking broad humor, while poetry, with its elevated passion, is spoken by persons with Italian or Romanic names. But in *Merry Wives* there is not an Italian name, though an Italian source has been found for some of its incidents; one stray French character is the Romanic contribution, and that is stranded in England and is caricatured. The setting and atmosphere of the play are purely English; there is through it a dash of English scenery with park, town, river, mead, and with a certain breeziness of the country. English jollity, too, we see throughout; merry England is here embodied, with its types in the merry wives, and in the men quite as merry. The world has turned to an English holiday, in whose pastimes business, work, the earnest ends of life have vanished. Yet not all England is here, but only the well-fed middle class of the country; the high and the low, the aristocracy

and the populace are absent; the court and city appear faintly in the distance. On account of these narrow limits which exclude the refined and elevated part of the social system, the broad comic vein can be indulged in, and the picture, in many of its shades, turns a caricature.

English we find it in another sense; there is plenty of good eating and drinking in the play, to which no human being still in the bonds of the flesh ought to make objection. The drama at once finds "dinner on the table," whereof the attraction is stated, "a hot venison pasty," and the wine has been brought in already with which the attempt is made to "drink down all unkindness," — a thing which in thirty throats requires quite a river of liquid. As the play begins with eating, so it ends with eating; thus says Page, comforting the Fat Knight: "Yet be cheerful, Knight; thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house, where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife that now laughs at thee." So eating is the grand peace-maker. But what shall we say to the drinking, with Falstaff as hero? The center of Windsor is the tavern, the Garter, from which the influences radiate through the whole action. Fat, round, red-faced, merry English people are all the characters apparently, except one, Slender, who is ridiculed and nick-named because he is not like the rest; the national consciousness seems reflected in the fact that he is

slender in mind, since he is slender in body. A lean man probably had a small chance of appreciation in Windsor. In this respect, too, the Fat Knight is the hero of the piece and gives tone to it throughout, by his ponderosity; verily he is the bearer, the grand embodiment of eating and drinking. For once we see that the poet has given over to his realistic tendency an entire drama, and allowed his idealism to be utterly swept out of the field.

Like all the comedies of Shakespeare, this play rests on Mediation, which is brought about mainly by the women. As in the instances of Portia, Rosalind, Hermione, and many others, the poet makes his leading female characters mediatorial, though their texture in the present case be slighter than usual. The merry wives not only maintain their honor against Falstaff, but to a degree, they mediate him; that is, they unmask and punish him, and bring him to repentance, which at least is uttered by him, and may last for a time. A husband is also cured of jealousy by their comic penalty. Anne Page, too, mediates her love conflict against father and mother. Even Mrs. Quickly has a mediatorial function, that of go-between and match-maker, wherein the high vocation falls down to caricature. So the four women of Windsor, though humble, show their kinship to Shakespeare's grand dramatic queens. Mediation now drops

into the realm of low comedy, though it preserves its genuine spirit in an arabesque of laughter.

The plot is usually said to be Shakespeare's own, but it is made up of many well-known dramatic tricks and situations — the popular inheritance of the stage of all ages. The manifold disguises and concealments are changed somewhat, yet they essentially belong to the world's comic literature, be it story, legend, drama, novel. Dr. Caius pulling the messenger out of a hiding place, was not in Shakespeare's time, a new dramatic incident; Ford, the jealous husband, who in disguise gets from Falstaff's own lips, the scheme against the honor of his wife, is found under another name in Straparola, an Italian novelist; the Fat Knight hid in the buck-basket, and dressed as the old witch of Brentford, is very faintly suggested in the same quarter; the disguised Fairy World, as well as Herne the Hunter, seem to be the poet's application of a local legend sprung of English fairy lore. We must note that the marvelous here is not employed in its own right, as it is in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but is something imitated, or in fact, burlesqued. But again we see that Shakespeare in the main borrowed his plot and incidents.

There are two very different texts of this play, that of the Quarto of 1602, and that of the Folio, of 1623. The first has about 1,400 lines, the second about 3,000; the difference in quantity

is made more emphatic by a still greater difference in quality; the first compared with the second is defective in nearly every point worthy of notice. Accordingly the text in use at present is that of the Folio, with a few additions from the Quarto. The conjectures which seek to account for the above difference are mainly two: that the Quarto is a mutilated stolen copy of the complete play, and that it is the Poet's first draught, possibly the hasty product of the fourteen days which the Queen is said to have allowed him for writing his play. It makes little difference which conjecture we accept; in fact, we may accept both and unite them into a third conjecture, namely, that the Quarto is a mutilated copy of the first sketch, which sketch was afterward finished, as we see it in the Folio. The time of its composition would seem to be somewhere about 1600, in the period of *Henry IV.* and of *Henry V.*; but its exact chronological relation to those plays is not determinable. Dramatically *Merry Wives* asserts a decided independence of the cognate historical plays.

Two traditions are inseparably connected with this play, though they do not appear in print till a hundred years or more after its composition. Says John Dennis in the dedicatory epistle to the *Comical Gallant*, a drama of his founded on *Merry Wives:* "This comedy was written at her (Queen Elizabeth's) command, and by her direc-

tion, and she was so eager to see it acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased at the representation." This was in 1702, when Dennis appealed to a living tradition. In 1709, Rowe in his *Life of Shakespeare*, adds another trait: "She (the Queen) was so well pleased with the admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of Henry IV., that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love; this is said to be the occasion of his writing the *Merry Wives of Windsor*." The truth of the tradition cannot be positively affirmed, but it declares a plain fact concerning this drama. The Falstaff of *Henry the Fourth* has lost something; he is placed in a situation where his comic character cannot develop itself with its former freedom. The statement, therefore, concerning Her Majesty's interference, if it does not give the cause, is at least the consequence, of the play; the judgment of it has been embodied in the form of a tradition — the Poet has been placed under some external restraint, which crippled his artistic conception and characterization.

But it is, nevertheless, a great favorite on the stage, and also in the private study of the reader. For comic incident, it can hardly be surpassed; the tricks and schemes follow in quick succession, and with increasing interest to the close; the ac-

tion is both rapid and diversified. A spirit of rollicking humor pervades the whole work — wit, caricature, and, sometimes, perhaps a touch of satire, are not wanting. The persons who participate in its scenes are of ample number, and of sufficient variety; there is no dullness or tediousness, though Falstaff is deceived thrice in quite the same manner. But the weak side of this drama is generally considered to be its characterization; the Fat Knight, who is the center of interest, has descended somewhat from his former high pedestal; the other characters are sketches, outlines, even caricatures — that is, the shapes here are not so fully individualized into human beings as is usual with the Poet; the chief stress seems to be laid upon movement and diversity. But there is a unity of theme and structure which places upon this drama the stamp of Shakespeare, who can be more truly detected by his dramatic architecture than by his characterization.

Casting a look at the external grouping, we observe that there are, in the main, four sets of people who are brought together. One is the Welsh parson and his foolish associates, Shallow and Slender; another is the two families of Windsor, which furnish the Merry Wives; the third is Sir John Falstaff and his boon companions, to whom mine Host of the Garter may be added; the fourth is Doctor Caius and his house-

hold. Fenton stands outside of them all, and is of a different mould. But the internal movement of the play does not run in these grooves; the groups just mentioned will separate and coalence again, according to the necessity of the idea which is to be embodied. This demands mainly two threads, though somewhat complicated — that of Falstaff and his adventures, and that of Mistress Anne Page and her suitors. Dropping, therefore, the merely external side of the drama, we may proceed to develop its inner structure along with its thought and characters.

The action lies wholly in the realm of the Family, of which relation there are presented two phases — that after marriage, and that before marriage. In the first case an assault is made upon the marital bond — from without by incontinence, and from within by jealousy; in the person of the wife the integrity of domestic life is attacked, both by the libertine and by the husband. In the second case there is a violation of the fundamental condition of marriage on the part of both father and mother, who disregard the right of love in the person of their daughter. Such is the double wrong which the course of the drama must now overcome in a twofold manner. On the one hand the foolish voluptuary, as well as the jealous husband, must meet with a comic retribution for their deeds, and on the other hand the choice of the maiden must be shown trium-

phant against the will of the parents. Mrs. Ford and Mistress Anne Page are the heroines; the former maintains the honor of married life against a double assault, the latter maintains the honor of love against a double assault. Both, therefore, in their different spheres, uphold the essential principle of the Family against the various colliding obstacles. Thus the action starts with violation, and passes through conflict to triumph and ultimate unity in the domestic relation.

The structure of the play can be seen best by dividing it into three movements, since the division into acts is made according to theatrical requirements, and seldom corresponds to the demands of thought. The first thread of the first movement has for its central figure Sir John Falstaff, who is here shown in his transition from thief to lover. He — together with his companions, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol — is in conflict with Shallow and Slender, who have been robbed and otherwise abused by the roguish set. Sir Hugh Evans (the Welsh Parson) and Page (the Windsor burgher) are the peace-makers. But from this occupation Sir John soon passes to love-making; he becomes infatuated with the notion that two married women, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, are enamored of his portly person. The second thread has for its central figure Mistress Anne Page, who finds herself besieged by three

suitors — the simpleton Slender, the fantastic Doctor Caius, and the sensible youth Fenton. From the rivalry of the first two lovers springs a duel — a challenge is sent by the French Doctor to the Welsh Parson. The second movement has also two threads, the first of which gives the adventures of Falstaff in his new occupation; he will continue to make advances to the Merry Wives, who will trick him twice, and thereby punish him — he will be cast into the Thames as dirty linen, and beaten as the old Witch of Brentford. Running parallel to the designs of the Fat Knight are the exploits of Ford, the jealous husband, who is also deluded and punished for his foolish suspicion. The second thread continues the story of Mistress Anne Page and her three lovers — one of whom, Slender, has the consent of the father; another, the French Doctor, has the support of the mother; the third, Fenton, has the powerful assistance of Mistress Anne herself. There results a conspiracy of each against the others — who the winner will be can not be told till the end of the play. An undercurrent belonging here is the duel, which terminates in a practical joke played upon the combatants by the Host of the Garter, who afterwards has his trick brought home to himself. The third movement brings together the two previous threads — the third punishment of Falstaff is made the means for the solution of the conflict

between the suitors; the schemes of both parents are defeated by the daughter, and she is joined in marriage to Fenton, who alone possesses her heart. Reciprocal affection must overcome all obstacles, as it is the true basis of the Family.

I.

The first movement, as usual in Shakespeare's comedies, portrays the wrong, the violation, which produces a tension, or possibly a disruption in the Family. Some breach in the Ethical World must be shown, in order to reveal the healing process of time's wounds. In the present instance, as before stated, the violation is double, against the marital and the ante-marital bond. Upon the former a double assault is made, that of incontinence and of jealousy; upon the latter a fourfold attack we witness, from father, mother, match-maker and parson. This profusion of incident clusters around two organic lines, which we are now to trace.

1. Taking up the first thread, we find the rural justice, Shallow, in high dudgeon over certain wrongs which he had suffered. He evidently has a very lofty opinion of the dignity of a country squire, as well as of the rank and antiquity of his family. But these qualities are coupled with some obtuseness and considerable ignorance; the result is a grotesque compound of pomposity and absurdity. His complaint against Falstaff is not

groundless: "Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, broken open my lodge;" but the Fat Hero laughs at him and his threats of legal procedure; his own folly will foil his attempt without any outside interference.

A second complaint of a similar kind is now made; it comes from Shallow's cousin, Slender, who also is a gentleman and a simpleton. He has, indeed, hardly sense enough to make a passable comic character; in him rustic simplicity quite reaches the borderland of irrationality. The portrait is vapid — even ugly. But he has money; he has rank. Our future interest in him arises entirely from the circumstances that he becomes one of the suitors of Mistress Anne Page. At present he prefers a charge "against you (Falstaff) and your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket." It is clear that Sir John and his band of retainers were making matters lively in the quiet neighborhood of Windsor; carousals at the inn, supported by thieving in the village, were the occupation of the jolly vagabonds.

Along with these two figures, which have a decided dash of caricature, is placed a third figure, which, in this respect, corresponds with them. It is Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh Parson, who, in consonance with his holy calling, is made to play the part of a mediator; he tries to soothe the an-

ger of his friend Shallow, and directs the attention of the latter into a more peaceful channel. His scheme is nothing less than to "leave our pribbles and prabbles and desire a marriage between Master Abraham (Slender) and Mistress Anne Page." In his work of reconciliation he is aided by the worthy burgher, Mr. Page, who invites the whole company to a dinner of venison pasty with wine, in order to "drink down all unkindness." The Welsh Parson is a good soul, but uses bad English. There is in him a strong leaven of sincerity — indeed, of piety; but his words and his actions never fail of some ridiculous incongruity, which forces us to laugh at him in spite of all our regard. But this laugh is his little penalty for his plan of marrying Slender to Anne Page's "seven hundred pounds," with the girl thrown in. Such a man must speak unhappy English.

This preliminary conflict is now silenced — it drops out of the play, and we advance to the real theme. Sir John has seen Mrs. Ford, and he intends to make love to her. He has, too, beheld Mrs. Page, whom also he purposes to woo, after his fashion. He says that both have given him the wink of invitation, which we must suppose to be purely the product of his own imagination, though the very free behavior of two Merry Wives hereafter would indicate that they may have extended to him some "most judicious œiliads." The pe-

culiar quality of Falstaff's love is plainly shown by the circumstances — it goes out towards two women, and married women at that. It, therefore, doubly violates the principle of the Family; one unmarried person of the opposite sex is evidently the ethical limit for man and for woman. Sensuality is, accordingly, the word to designate Sir John's nature. But there is another motive which appears here — the Knight, in both cases, seeks access to the husband's purse through the wife. These two elements run through the entire delineation of his character.

This change in his life brings about a dismissal of his attendants; Nym and Pistol refuse to be made the instruments of his suit, and are sent off. Bardolph had previously turned tapster. The discharged followers will take their revenge by informing the husbands of Falstaff's purpose; it is this information which weaves Ford, the man of jealousy, into the action. Thus we have witnessed Sir John's transition from thieving to wooing; but his love can only be lust. Also, we are able to account for the double motive to be observed in his future career; he carries along his desire for ill-gotten wealth into his amorous adventures; booty and beauty are his two almost equally balanced principles. In fact, his avarice seems sometimes stronger than his sensuality. The two traits consist well together — both are merely different forms of gratification of appetite

against ethical subordination. Another remark ought to be made here—it is at this point that we can observe a connection between this play and *Henry the Fourth*; in the latter Falstaff is shown as the thief, whereas now he is seen changing to the lover.

2. The second thread leads us at once to "sweet Anne Page," about whom is spinning a web of marvels which rarely falls to the lot of a simple country girl. It has already been noticed that the good Welsh Parson, in the interest of peace, has proposed a match between the dear maiden and Slender; and now the latter has been conversing with her, in a manner which has effectually satisfied her mind, upon the interesting subject of hot meat and the bear, Sackerson. The Parson very reasonably deems himself unequal to the task of completing the enterprise, and he seeks the aid of Mrs. Quickly, famed throughout the community for her dexterity in such matters. The old gossip is a clearly-drawn character; she finds out the young marriageable people of the town, wins their confidence and their secrets, and kindly offers her mediation. She has become celebrated in this line of business; all three lovers in the play seek her assistance. The present enterprise, however, is one which is too great for her; general satisfaction is impossible; still, she promises her aid to each, and is not averse to taking money. But Anne Page, with an instinctive slyness, has

not revealed her inclination; she, therefore, stands out of the reach of the old match-maker, and controls her own destiny.

Now Mrs. Quickly is attached to the household of the Frenchman, Dr. Caius, who, like Sir Hugh, is defective in English, and, moreover, lacks mental ballast. Volatile, irascible, always effervescing, he pops and foams like a bottle of champagne from his native land. He has, however, the pretension to courtly manners — a servant must be at his heels; he also fully recognizes the code of honor. Then the mixed fragments of language — French and English — which fly out of his mouth give the impression of a strong caricature. But the main link which connects him with the action is that he, too, is a suitor for the hand of Mistress Anne Page. Now comes the explosion. The Doctor goes to his closet and finds the messenger of Sir Hugh to Mrs. Quickly ensconced there in secret; he drags him out and the whole matter is revealed. Then results the challenge. The good Parson, in seeking to bring peace and happiness to others, has himself become involved in war, which particularly threatens destruction to the English tongue.

Such are two of the lovers; now comes a third — Master Fenton. He, too, is seeking the kind offices of Mrs. Quickly, who, of course, gives him encouragement and takes his money. It is clear that he is in some doubt about the success

of his suit, and Mrs. Quickly also thinks to herself that "Anne loves him not, for I know Anne's mind as well as another does." The young girl is clearly mistress of the situation — she will dispose of herself according to the right of love, and bid defiance to the fine-spun schemes of father, mother, and match-maker. But it must not be thought that her conduct is the result of reflection; on the contrary, it is the true instinct of her womanly nature which guides her, amid so many snares, with complete success. She does not say much in the play; her love makes her act, but it does not seem to demand utterance. Sentimental scenes are, therefore, suppressed in this drama, and, indeed, they would hardly be in unison with its general tenor.

Let us try to express the full scope of the first movement in a few words. There is unfolded a conflict with the Family in its real and in its potential forms — after marriage and before marriage. Falstaff assails two married women, and thus seeks to destroy the domestic bond already established; the parents of Mistress Anne Page violate the right of their daughter in disregarding her love, and thus they sap the foundation of marriage. Both parties, therefore, are in collision with the domestic institution, yet in very different degrees — the one party attacks it as realized, hence becomes criminal, and should be punished; the other party attempts to thwart its

true realization by their individual ends, and hence, must be foiled in their endeavor.

II.

The second movement is essentially mediatorial; its process is to teach the old lecher a lesson, which will turn him from his evil ways — a lesson in which the jealous husband participates. Anne Page, too, shows herself an accomplished mediator of her own conflict. All these women are equal to the emergency, both in punishing the wrong and in vindicating the right, of the Family. Even Mrs. Quickly, the fraud and caricature of mediation, seems to attain her object, which is money.

1. The first thread continues to unfold the adventure of Sir John, who is misled in part by his vanity, for he thinks he is irresistible with women, and in part by his wicked experience, for he confounds the country freedom of the Windsor Wives with the city freedom of his London female acquaintances. The Merry Wives receive his love-letter; they are indignant, and resolve upon revenge. The retributive nature of his punishment is plainly suggested by Mrs. Ford: "I think the best way were to entertain him with hope till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease." The pith of their characters is, they are not squeamish, but they are honest. Their language can scarcely be called elegant,

their jests are not always refined, and their imaginations are not remarkable for delicacy. It must be confessed that they have probably given some provocation for the attack of the old sensualist, in their intercourse with him. But their supreme comic trait is their love of fun; they forget insult and a soiled reputation in a good opportunity for some sport. The letter of Falstaff furnishes an occasion, which is seized on the spot. Dame Quickly is sent to him, and she prepares the way for a meeting at the house of Mrs. Ford.

Now appears the counterpart of Falstaff, namely, the jealous husband, Ford. He is informed of the Fat Knight's scheme by the dismissed attendants of the latter, and his suspicions are fully aroused. He disguises himself, goes to Sir John, and verifies his information. Here another incident is introduced which must not be forgotten in estimating the character of Falstaff — he is now seen acting the part of a procurer; this is the third capital fact of his career in this play. Ford is the contrast to the easy-going Page, who, however, has his foible in a different direction, namely, in disregarding the right of his daughter. But the jealous husband is the true counterpart of the seducer — the one embitters and undermines the domestic relation on its internal side, the other assails it from without. Hence Ford and Falstaff belong together in thought, and manifest separate phases of the same violation.

But the Merry Wives are equal to the occasion, particularly Mrs. Ford, who will punish both her assailants in a supreme manner. Twice is Sir John led into the trap prepared for him; twice does he receive the full penalty for his act. With dirty linen, a symbol of his own character, he is tossed into the water, which, however, will not cleanse him as it does a soiled garment. Once more he returns to his evil ways; this time he is beaten for a sorceress — the incarnation of Satan. In a parallel manner Ford makes two public raids upon the honor of his wife; besides the keen torture of jealousy — an infernal fire of itself — he is shamed by the jeers and reproaches of his neighbors. Ford at last repents, and expresses contrition to his wife; his reward is that he is henceforward admitted to share the sport which is now drawing to an end.

2. The second thread resumes the story of Mistress Anne Page and her wooing. The suitors present their claims with vigor; the father is won by the large amount of land which Slender possesses, and is ready, for such an offset, to marry his daughter to a simpleton. His motive is impure: he would sacrifice his child, and, hence, he must be thwarted in his attempt. The mother has selected Doctor Caius, being influenced thereto by the prospect of display and the hope of introduction at court, where the Doctor is known; thus her vanity is tickled, nor

does she forget that he has money. Both parents manifestly violate the right of love, since they have some ground foreign to it for the marriage of their child. Mistress Anne, however, has made her own selection; it is Fenton. Not much is said of this young man, but what is said redounds to his credit. He openly declares that he seeks the hand of Anne not for her wealth — though he confesses that such was at first his object; further acquaintance, however, has revealed in her character something above all property. He has a higher position at court than Doctor Caius; he is better descended than Slender; and has, moreover, good sense, which belongs to neither of the other suitors. The Poet has, therefore, marked this pair with the unfailing sign of future union, namely, reciprocal affection. The love of each is requited — they are one in emotion, and, hence belong together.

In this connection we must note the result of the duel which sprang from the intrigue around Anne Page. The Host of the Garter was chosen to make the preparations; he first fools the combatants by sending each to a different place; then he brings them together, utters jibes at both, and finally goes away, taking along their weapons. They can do naught but become reconciled; a basis of agreement is furnished by their common grievance against the Host of the Garter; they at once unite in a resolution to be revenged upon

him. "The soul-curer and the body-curer" are now fast friends; both are foreigners, and murder only English in trying to murder each other. They are both made comic in speech and in deed; their punishment is their caricature; they had no business to go counter to Anne Page's right of love; they are not only thwarted in this attempt, and befooled in the duel, but are not allowed by the Poet to speak good English. Such is the comic retribution; the wronger of love is the enemy of Anglo-Saxon. How they got even with the Host of the Garter is not expressly declared, though we may suppose they had something to do with the deceit practiced upon him in the name of the German Duke. But this is an obscure and unsatisfactory part of the drama.

III.

The third movement recounts the complete reconciliation of all the colliding elements. Two tricks are not enough to disillusion Falstaff, so strongly intrenched in him are his self-conceit and his salacity; the bait of temptation is flung before his eyes a third time, and he grasps for it, but the Devil will not allow him to sin. The grossest trick of all is played upon him, he is reached through his superstition in spite of his wit; he loses his vanity and sees that lechery leads to folly. The story of Falstaff's final deception

is made the means of settling the struggle among the suitors of Anne Page; thus the two threads run together in a common solution and need not be separately developed.

The Merry Wives induce Falstaff at midnight in the park to represent Herne, the Hunter, with horns on his head. The song of the disguised fairies declares the penalty of lust, and the thought of the whole incident is the retribution of sinful desire; the moral intended is directly expressed. At the same time Fenton and Anne Page, who are endowed with mutual love, slip away to the church and get married. She violates the will of her parents, but is true to the higher principle of the Family. Here, too, the lesson is inculcated in the plainest words, and the whole extract may be given as Shakespeare's view of his favorite collision:

> "The offense is holy that she hath committed;
> And this deceit loses the name of craft,
> Of disobedience, of unduteous title,
> Since therein she doth evitiate and shun
> A thousand irreligious, cursed hours,
> Which forced marriage would have brought upon her."

In no passage has the Poet expressed more clearly his moral convictions upon this subject; disregard of parental will, in the present case, is an offense, yet a holy offense; the deception practiced by Mistress Anne is justifiable — indeed, praiseworthy; for thus she shuns all evils of a forced

marriage. The true unity of the Family is more important than adherence to an abstract maxim. Formal morality, when it collides with the domestic institution of man, must be quietly circumvented. Here we touch the great practical question of life, which comes home, at times, to every individual: What is the true course of conduct in such a conflict of duties? One side or the other must be subordinated, yet both sides have their validity. Shakespeare's method is to put what he deems the lower principle under the higher, and to use the less important as a means for the more important. The danger of such a doctrine is manifest — men will be too apt to see a collision of duties when there is none, and proceed to trample upon morality from specious pretexts. But the difficulty is not removed by shutting the eyes or by calling names; it must be met by action, and must be solved by thought.

But what shall be said of the character of Falstaff as shown in this play? He is portrayed in love, but his love is mere sensuality. Its nature can be easily inferred from the fact that it is called forth by two married women. But there is added his desire for money; he tries to reach the husband's purse through the wife, and, at the same time, takes the gains of a procurer. Still, all his cash is spent for bodily gratification, and we come back to sensuality as his fundamental trait. The comic element of his portrait-

ure consists in his retributive deception; his passion spreads the net in which he is caught. He is outwitted at his own game, tricked with his own cunning; his fine-spun intrigue simply entangles himself. But the personal trait which gave him most pleasure was his cunning, and, hence, he does not hesitate to attempt carrying out his monstrous scheme. Bitter is his confession: "See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent when 'tis upon ill employment." It is, indeed, his deepest humiliation that his cunning has been unable to save him from this supreme disgrace. "Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this?" It has all been done, too, by rude country bumpkins, men and women, honest people, but merry. He belongs, in this play at least, to Involuntary Comedy of Character; he pursues an utter delusion without knowing it; the solution is that he be brought to a complete consciousness of what he has been doing, and of the absurd nature of his conduct. This is the comic retribution which here overtakes him. Nor does he fail to declare the moral of his story: "This is enough to be the decay of lust and late walking through the realm."

Thus the two groups have removed the obstacles which stood in the way of the Family, and harmony has been attained. The Merry Wives have vindicated their integrity and puinshed the

aggressors; particularly Mrs. Ford is the strong character who has defended her domestic honor against the assaults from within and from without. Mistress Anne Page has triumphed over the schemes of her parents, and is joined in wedlock to the chosen one of her heart. In both cases — before and after marriage — the principle of the Family is victorious. On the whole, it is a Comedy of Situation, or rather of situations; the disguise of Ford is one side of the intrigue, and the simulation of the Merry Wives is its other side; while the thread of Mistress Anne Page has also its concealments. Still, the whole action does not turn round a masked individual — it is made up of a series of tricks and deceptions.

With this drama the treatment of the Pure Comedies of Shakespeare is brought to a conclusion. It will be seen that the ethical sphere in which they all are placed is the Family, though other elements may, for a short time, shine in upon the main current of the action. The dramatic structure, too, is observed to be fundamentally the same in all; the threads and movements are the lines upon which the play must be followed if we wish to reach the conception of the Author. These are, indeed, the web and woof of which the close, yet varied, texture of the work is composed; around these must be grouped the characters, which are thus shown at once in their relation to the rest of the play and in their

inner development. If the critic merely picks out and describes in succession the separate persons, the living movement of the whole and its parts are lost; the gradual evolution of individual character disappears from the mind, or is grasped as a dead result; while the structural principle of the drama utterly perishes. A critical method which leaves out any essential element of Shakespeare is manifestly imperfect; and it ought to be added that a critical method which injects any foreign element into Shakespeare is unquestionably vicious.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

This play connects on many sides with other plays of Shakespeare. The grouping of the characters in pairs we have noticed in earlier pieces; now it has almost a schematic regularity. Still this is so deftly concealed with life and movement that we do not notice it without special effort. Benedick and Beatrice are Petruchio and Katharine deepened and transformed. Hero, the gentle cousin, corresponds to the gentle sister Bianca in *Taming of the Shrew*, and to the gentle sister Luciana in *Comedy of Errors*. Around these gentle ones mainly the intrigue spins. The illegitimate Don John is related in circumstances and character to Edmund in *Lear*. The stupid officials producing comic effects through perverted English, have their counterparts in *Merry Wives*, and reach back to *Love's Labor's Lost*. The deep wrong to the woman from the one who ought to love and protect her, the supposed death of her in consequence, the bitter repentance of the wrong-doer, with the restoration of the lost one in the end, reach forward and connect this play with *Winter's Tale*, while Hero has traces of

the grand mediatorial woman, Hermione, who thwarts the hardest blow of fate by endurance.

Beatrice tries to be a mediator after her change from wit to love, and to restore Hero, but her success is doubtful, she is no Portia, no Rosalind; what she has done for herself, she cannot do for others. She is incapable of reaching the highest woman's height; her training to wit has unfitted her for the supreme gift of mediation. But to her credit it must be said that she has a noble impulse thereto, which in time may be realized. The most she can now do is to send her lover to fight a duel with the supposed injurer of Hero — a very doubtful proceeding, which, if successful, could effect nothing. Her mediatorial act is but a piece of foolish good will.

There is a suddenness in the play which seems to belong to the South, a passionate intensity even among the older people, a flashing of wit and caprice which subjects everybody to deception; all live in a world of show, of the senses, and are easily swept off their feet by any delusive appearance. What seems to have caused this peculiar spiritual atmosphere at Messina?

If we could catch the prevailing tone of this drama and put it in words, we would say that it shows the folly of wit. The character that seeks to unfold itself into satire, sarcasm, ridicule or even smartness of speech is a comic character, while trying to make the rest of the world comic;

it is self-annulling and absurd in twisting every thing into absurdity and nullity; its end, being nugatory turns, when realized, into nothing. Everybody at the court of Messina is a wit or witling, down to the waiting-maids; the great object in life is to set off self by brilliant scintillations. Words are "a fantastical banquet;" virtues are "transhaped" into their opposites by the cunning of speech; the earnest purposes of life as well as the great institutions of the world — particularly the Family — are used as kindling wood for a jest. There is intellectual culture in Messina but totally perverted, negative; it has sharpened the faculties to that species of refined egotism which seems ready to set on fire the universe for a light by which to see and admire itself. Undoubtedly wit has a place in the order of things, but when it insists upon being the whole of that order, it turns upon itself and commits suicide; it is tragic to itself but comic to the rest of the world. All at Messina are more or less infected; if they are not playing with words, they are indulging in masks, tricks, disguises, each according to his gift; even the gray-beards take part. An astonishing amount of eaves-dropping is at Messina; then they eaves-drop the eaves-dropper. It is indeed a giddy, comic world, yet perpetually threatening to become tragic through its giddiness; it is rescued in spite of its wit, by its witless but honest mem-

bers. Dogberry and his associates are the saving principle; they too have a kind of wit, but unintentional. Such is the outcome of the comedy; that flashing, witty world of Messina would go up in smoke, unless it had a little stupid honesty to help it out. Yet even Dogberry has a smack of the court, the disease of word-mongering has laid hold of him too, the uneducated man, and has generated a new kind of language. In this play, then, we have, not merely the wit of comedy, but the comedy of wit; not merely some of the characters are witty, but the whole world of Messina is essentially a wit world, which is to be shown passing away like a bubble and leaving behind the reality of life.

The gay, light-hearted pleasantry of the drama has always found special favor with readers, and is its main, though not its sole, quality. It is not so poetical as some other comedies of the Poet; the ethereal glow of imagery is supplanted by the sparkling display of witty dialogue. In like manner there is a total deficiency of ideal scenery; everything takes place on the solid ground of reality. There is no transition to a pastoral or fairy realm, where the world of the imagination soothes and reconciles the conflicts of society — where the individual torn by the struggles of actual life finds repose and ultimate restoration. The action lies wholly in the sphere of Real Comedy; there are the high group and the low

group of comic characters — the one set is designated by their employment of the most lively sallies of wit; the other set by a grotesque mixture of pretension and stupidity. Then there is a dark-colored thread — the group of villains, who make by no means a mirth-provoking picture. Finally, there is added the tragic element — malice assails, and for a time triumphs over, innocence; the feeling of pity rises alongside the feeling of indignation, and then both these sterner emotions are submerged in a grand overflow of merriment. It is sometimes hard to tell which element predominates — the serious of the humorous; certain it is that we hear the extreme notes of the scale of passion in very rapid succession. Most people, however, will probably decide that the leading parts of Benedict and Beatrice, together with Dogberry and his associates, as well as the general movement of the whole play, produce a more positive comic than tragic impression. On the other hand, the sad story of the innocent maid, Hero, runs through and controls the entire dramatic action. Thus the two sides are almost equally balanced.

A glance may first be cast upon the purely external structure of the work. The household of Leonato stands in the foreground; it furnishes all the women; especially the two chief female characters are to be observed. Now comes the company of Don Pedro, which returns to this

household after a short campaign against the foe; it furnishes only men, among whom are the two lovers for the young ladies. The lively tone of the play is taken from this happy meeting; the war has been successful; honor and fame have been attained; there has also followed the restoration to home and friends. It is a time when human beings may be allowed to indulge in a merry mood, when an effervescence of wild frolic cannot possibly be prevented. Later is added the group of stupid, yet well-meaning, officials, who give a new comic tinge when the action is growing too somber. These are the three external elements which make up the story. But the internal movement must be grasped differently; it has as its central points the two pairs of lovers, and a critical analysis must follow the same line on which they move.

The ethical sphere in which the drama is laid is the Family, and, indeed, that phase of the Family antecedent to marriage. Two obstacles arise, each of which produces a disruption of a sexual pair. The course of the play will be to overcome the obstacles, and to unite the separated couples. But let us mark the difference between them. The one pair starts with a mutual defiance — with an intellectual separation; they berate each other with poignant, though witty, abuse; they go further, and assail the Family, as such, with bitter raillery. They, therefore, refuse to join the in-

stitution, and think themselves far superior to its influence; but the institution will show itself stronger than the individual, and subordinate both of them in the end. Not only will they marry, but will marry each other; such is their comic retribution. The second pair, however, have their union disrupted by an external power, over which they have no control; the breath of calumny touches the woman and destroys her character temporarily; with her a marriage is impossible under the circumstances. This part has a serious — indeed, a tragic — depth and coloring; but the difficulty is removed by the introduction of a purely comic instrumentality. To sum up the subject, there are two obstacles to union in the Family — the one is internal, in the conscious volition; the other comes from without, from an external cause. Both, however, are overcome, and the transition from separation to unity in marriage is the play.

Let us now unfold, in a general way, the clear, yet somewhat intricate, structure of the drama. The action falls into three distinct movements. The first movement exhibits a triple relation of the individual towards the Family. The first thread of it is that of Benedick and Beatrice; here is seen the conscious separation of the two sexes. The second thread is that of Hero and Claudio together with those who are promoting the match; this starts with the unconscious unity

of love, and culminates in the declared betrothal. The third thread is that of Don John and his associates; it exhibits the means for disrupting the union in process of formation; he undermines the character of Hero, and is the chosen instrument for destroying marriage, since he is himself illegitimate. The relation of these three groups is now manifest: One separates, the other unites, the last shows the violator of the ethical bond — that is, the villain. The second movement also portrays unity and conflict in the Family, but in a manner just opposite to that of the first movement. Here the first thread exhibits the reconciliation of Benedick and Beatrice; their mutual hostility is turned into mutual affection through a disguise which, though a disguise, reveals their own true nature to themselves. The second thread shows the union of Hero and Claudio assailed by the villainy of Don John; he first attempts to excite the jealousy of Claudio against his brother, Don Pedro, which, however, is soon counteracted. But his second effort is successful — he blasts the reputation of Hero by a false device, so that Claudio publicly disowns her, and thus their tie is disrupted. The third thread of the second movement will introduce to us the instruments of mediation, which are to vindicate innocence and bring to light the wrong-doers. They are of two very distinct kinds — the Friar, who maintains the purity of Hero, and conceals

her with the certainty of future evidence to that effect; and the stupid officers of the law, who, by sheer dullness, uncover the villainy. Thus those before separated are now united in love, and those before united in love are now separated. The third movement still remains, which will expose the deception, show the repentance of Claudio for his hasty action, bring back Hero and restore the bond which has been torn asunder. Thus the two pairs have overcome all the obstacles, and are at last united in marriage.

I.

It will be seen, by the organic analysis just given, that the first movement shows essentially the first Separation, while the other two movements represent the Mediation and the Reconciliation. This play thus has the same general structure as Shakespeare's other comedies, yet with some variations peculiar to itself. For instance, in this first movement (which runs over into the second act) there is along side the Separation the love affair of Claudio, whose spirit is that of union and not of conflict. In general, this play is very deftly put together; it is not easy to say just where the connecting joint is, so well-covered is the skeleton of the work with living tissue. Still it must have a skeleton and joints, as every other organism; and the outlines

and sweep of the parts must be observed, though we see not the exact points of beginning and end.

1. These naked outlines we are now to fill up with the material of the play. Taking up the first thread of the first movement, we at once light upon two leading characters — Beatrice and Benedick. Beatrice is a strong-minded, sharp-tongued woman; she has sterling traits of character, but is, on the whole, unlovely. Her quickness of intellect makes her superior to any man of the company; but the tendency of her mind is towards sarcasm, which seldom leaves the impression of amiability. The chief object of her attacks is Benedick, who, being of the same nature, has called forth his own castigation by his own scourge; upon him she pours a flood of scornful wit and ridicule. This merely personal assault is not offensive; but she is next seen turning her satire against an institution, and an institution which is peculiarly her own world — the relation of marriage is the mark for some of her sharpest shafts. At this point admiration for her ceases; a woman who derides the Family begins to be a monstrosity, and a twitch of discomfort will always follow her happiest sallies. Thus, in Beatrice, intellectual acuteness has covered up the emotional nature, but this is still alive, and gives out a few straggling sparks, though, for the most part, rigidly suppressed. But in it is seen the germ of her future change.

Benedick, too, is a wit-cracker; he is also a woman-hater — the special object of his satirical thrusts being this same Beatrice. Thus they scorch each other in their own flame, though the woman is quicker and keener than the man. It is manifest that a personal repulsion is common to both, and herein they are alike. But Benedick also is a scoffer of the domestic relation; he does not stop with assailing an individual woman, but advances to a general crusade against the sex and their institution. Again, in regard to this fundamental element of their characters, both are quite the same. Benedick is more tolerable than Beatrice, because hatred of marriage can be better excused in a man than in a woman, though it is by no means an admirable trait in him. But Benedick is really conquered by her in the combat of wit; he openly confesses defeat; he is beaten on his own chosen ground. This conquest is the earnest of his future destiny; beneath his apparent dislike has arisen admiration for Beatrice — and admiration means love. But at present there is a mutual repugnance — at least, separation; each has offended the other by twitting on the peculiar weakness of each; vanity has been touched, and will not permit them to see the common principle of their own natures.

2. The second thread unfolds the love of Hero and Claudio; it furnishes a strong contrast to the wordiness, wit, and intellect of Beatrice and

Benedick. Hero is a passive, rather than a positive, character; the impression which she leaves is that of a quiet, sweet disposition, made to love and to be loved. She possesses the instinctive female nature, which lives in emotion and seeks no expression in language. How definite is her picture; yet how little she says! She offers no resistance; she makes no reflection; it is her supreme happiness to dwell in the feelings of domestic life. Already, before the war, she had a secret inclination for Claudio; the opportunity has now come for its fruition. It is not, therefore, his newly-acquired glory which furnishes the motive for her love; her sacrifice is the unconscious, yet complete, sacrifice of the individual to the institution.

Claudio is a brave and honest, but light and unstable, character. He is not bad; on the contrary, he is free from all ethical violation; but he would be a worthier type of manhood were he more firm in his convictions. His love is spontaneous and unselfish; having arisen, it must find some means for reaching its goal. He appeals to his friend, the Prince Don Pedro, to aid him in his enterprise; he seems too bashful to undertake the business himself. Don Pedro agrees to obtain a declaration from Hero, for which purpose the intended masquerade offers a good opportunity. Disguised as Claudio, the Prince succeeds in his purpose; the mutual affection is

revealed to each of the lovers; betrothal rapidly follows. The consent of the father is joyfully given; hence, in this play, there will be no conflict with the will of the parent. But another obstacle is in the process of preparation, which will assail the proposed marriage and tear the man and woman asunder with a diabolical fury. To this portion of the drama we now pass.

3. The third thread introduces to us Don John, who is to be the means of separating Hero and Claudio. His first appearance indicates a settled melancholy, which, however, seems to leave him when he hears of an opportunity for mischief. His brother, Don Pedro, has just taken him into favor again after some previous bad conduct; he is now upon his good behavior, and, hence, seems morose from want of occupation. Hate is his principle, villainy his deed; also, he clearly comprehends, and openly declares, his own character; he calls himself a "plain-dealing villain." His animosity is mainly directed against his brother, who, however, appears to have treated him with leniency and forgiveness. Next his resentment turns upon Claudio, who has never wronged him, but whom he imagines to have "all the glory of my overthrow." It looks almost as if he hated for the sake of hate, and found pleasure only in deviltry.

But there is a reason for his conduct and disposition — there has been committed against him

a wrong whose sting has injected its poison into his whole existence, and transformed his nature. The villain, pure and simple, is a horrible monstrosity without human lineaments, and is certainly not a Shakespearian creation. Don John, therefore, has some ground for his present character; the Poet has indicated it plainly — it is to be found in his illegitimacy. The Bastard is the natural villain; he is punished for an offense which he never committed, and necessarily turns against institutions which make him an outcast and an outlaw. Above all, the Family disowns him, though it is the special function of the Family to love and cherish the child. He thus inhales the atmosphere of wrong from his birth; law — justice itself — becomes, in his case, the instrument of injustice. With vengeance he turns upon society, and especially upon the Family, which, however, cannot recognize him without its own destruction. The Bastard represents a perpetual conflict, which, in a strong nature, must become tragical; he has to obey that which destroys him, or, if he disobeys, he becomes the villain. Shakespeare has elsewhere made him the scourge of his kindred. In *King Lear* it is the father — the real author of the violation — whom he hates and destroys; here it is the brother, whom, as a member of his family, he must hate, but whom he must not destroy. It is also natural that he should detest marriage;

and his effort to undermine the legitimate union of Claudio and Hero springs from his own position and character. He has gathered around himself two followers, who know him and who are ready to pamper his evil disposition.

One of these followers, Borachio, is the intellectual villain of the play, who plans, plots, suggests the wickedness which Don John, by his position and power, is able to carry out. It is this Borachio who lays the scheme by which the innocent Hero is falsified; he knows his master well and controls through his superior inventive cunning; he has also a true insight into the characters of Claudio and Don Pedro, and is aware of their flightiness, which jumps to a conclusion without due evidence. Borachio spins a net in which to catch all these butterflies of the court, and comes near succeeding; his motive is not malice, like that of Don John, but apparently money, the "thousand ducats" which glitter in the eyes of the poor serving-man with captivating brilliancy. Borachio not only ties the knot of his play by his plan, he also loosens it by his confession; from him comes the disorder of the world of Messina, as well as its restoration to order. Yet what a world to be upset by such means! This little scamp Borachio is, on the whole, the deepest character of the play.

The first movement may, therefore, be said, in general, to exhibit three relations of the individ-

ual toward the Family. One is positive — it shows the love of man and woman, which always lies at the foundation of domestic life. The other two are negative, though in very different degrees. Benedick and Beatrice manifest an intellectual rejection of the institution; they spend their wit upon it, they deride it, but they are at last caught themselves and subjected to its yoke. Hence they are comic; they are pursuing a delusion of which they are unconscious; thus they belong to Involuntary Comedy of Character. Their violation of the Family consists in their derisive taunts against it, and their refusal to enter it — a sin of omission rather than of commission. But the conduct of Don John deepens to active criminality; he proposes to destroy it in his malignant hatred; hence he proceeds to the deed, while the hostility of the witty pair does not pass out of the intellect.

II.

The second movement will unite the separated couple — Benedick and Beatrice; it will separate the united couple — Claudio and Hero; it will also introduce the means of bringing the latter together again. Indeed we see the preparation for foiling the lie before we see the effect of the lie; the two followers of Don John are arrested in advance of Hero's rejection at the altar. This

movement shows, therefore, essentially Mediation, though one thread of it has for a time a counter tendency.

1. Of this movement the first thread continues the story of Benedick and Beatrice, whose union is now accomplished by a trick — in fact, by the same trick played upon each, in quite the same manner. Benedick secretes himself in order to listen to Claudio's serenade; but he is observed, and, according to a previously concerted plan, he is made to hear the strange news that Beatrice is really in love with him — only she conceals it under a rough exterior. A like tale is prepared for Beatrice, as she is hid in the garden. Both are caught at once; the passionate flame begins to burn in their bosoms the moment they think that their affection is requited. The thought is: The hate of the one caused the hate of the other; let now that hate be transformed to love — then the love of the one must cause the love of the other. If hate calls forth hate, then love must call forth love, for the principle is that each is determined through the other. Each is bound to reflect the other, so that, if by any means the image of the one be changed, it will be faithfully mirrored by the other. The logic is manifest: When two individuals are determined as opposites, they are therein identical; the difference unquestionably exists, but is more superficial than the identity. Benedick and Beatrice have

their unity in their common nature; they are alike in their diversity; their agreement is far deeper than their disagreement. The trick is employed merely to break the external shell of opposition, and reveal them to themselves in their inner harmony. Though the deception may be made known to them, it has served its purpose, for it has brought them to a consciousness of their true relation, and they can never return to their former condition. They were, in fact, disguised to each other; the trick simply tears off the disguise. The possibility of love had been previously hinted by the Poet — the strong desire of Beatrice for the Family had more than once burst up through its intellectual covering; the admiration of Benedick for her wit was poorly concealed in sarcasms. The contradiction runs through all their actions — they are really doing the contrary of that which they think they are doing. The culmination is reached when it is seen that the more they are opposed the more like each other they become — the greater the external repulsion the greater the internal attraction.

Marvelous is the change which at once takes place in the man and the woman. Both almost cease to be witty; they perhaps do not lose their wit, but it nearly — not quite, indeed — vanishes in the new earnest purpose of life. Gone is that scintillation of self, that egoistic sparkle which is

in love with its own brightness; another love has taken its place. It sprung mainly from thrusts at the domestic tie in some form; but now both are fastened by that tie. Henceforth no more sharp encounters, no more waste of the brain's phosphorescence; if sometimes they cannot wholly keep down their spirits, the utterance is not sarcasm but humor, whose basis is love. This transformation of Beatrice and Benedick lies deep in the thought of the play.

Beatrice has, indeed, shown the danger of wit in the woman, wit is her weakness, her comic folly, which she is to get rid of by discipline. It is to her glory that she does get rid of this weakness which is so strong in her, and so fascinating to her vanity. She becomes frightened at Hero's picture of her:

> Disdain and scorn rides sparkling in her eyes
> Misprising what they look on, and her wit
> Values itself so highly that to her
> All matter else seems weak; she cannot love —
> She is so self-endeared.

But she can love, and she can renounce her self-endearment; she at once forms her resolution. "Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?" Truly she is now seeing herself as others see her; she owes many thanks to her cousin Hero, which she will try to repay. "Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride adieu!" That is the end of the witty career of Beatrice; but

she is going further, she will love: "Benedick, love on, I will requite thee." Thus we reach the transfigured Beatrice. The poet Campbell has called her an odious woman, whereat many gallant critics with drawn swords have rushed to her rescue. But Campbell's words are hardly too strong for the first Beatrice, the unlovely sarcastic female; but the second Beatrice, the glorified one, he seems not to have known. Yet even her germ lay in the first, and needed but time and opportunity to make it unfold into its flower.

Benedick goes through essentially the same process, by the same means. His picture is held up before himself by Don Pedro, and he resolves to change. "I did never think to marry, I must not seem proud; happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending." This is true of Benedick, and is his highest worth. He will get rid of his folly, when he comes to see it. He will proceed further. "Love me! why, it must be requited." Of course it must, and Benedick is a redeemed man; he too can love. But how about the merry war, "quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain," which his friend will let loose upon him now, "because I have railed so long against marriage?" This, too, he will endure like a brave lover, he cannot be swerved from his purpose by "a college of wit-crackers;" he at last masters his direst spectre: "Do you think I care for a satire or an

epigram?'' He is now the truly valiant man; he was before merely the courageous soldier. Finally he sees the negative nature of wit: "if a man will be beaten by brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him.'' Certainly, the highest beauty, the greatest virtue, the loftiest genius present sides for ridicule. Benedick is intellectually cleansed as well as morally; he has obtained a new insight into the true worth of things and persons.

2. The second thread, which resumes the story of Hero and Claudio, is now darkened by the suspicion of disloyalty which Don John succeeds in throwing on the woman. Claudio has once more manifested his credulous, and indeed jealous, disposition; he accepted the villain's suggestion that the Prince has betrayed him in his suit for the hand of Hero, all of which turned out false; this incident is a preparation for his ready belief in Don John's accusation against her whom he loved. The Bastard now tricks the senses of both Claudio and Don Pedro. Borachio, one of his servants, is intimate with Hero's waiting-maid, who is induced to appear at the window during the night and answer to the name of her mistress. Claudio and Don Pedro are concealed near at hand; they at once conclude that the charge is true — that Hero is disloyal. It lies in the character of Claudio — who is not wicked, but flighty — to be thus duped; and the

light, volatile character of the Prince is equally exposed to deception. Such are the rulers; hence delusion must be a common affair in the realm. The stupid mistakes of Dogberry and his companions exhibit a similar phase in low official life. But the comic retribution for this light-headedness is not neglected; the senseless clowns uncover the villainy which had deceived the rulers. The question arises: which of the two classes of men is the wiser?

The serious import of this part now deepens to a tragic intensity. The ceremony of marriage is about to be performed between Hero and Claudio; they are already at the altar, in the presence of the Friar, when the stunning refusal to consummate the union is given. Claudio repudiates his betrothed on the spot, and publicly charges her with unchastity. His statement is confirmed by the Prince, and so the first condition of marriage is destroyed by assailing the purity of the woman. Hero, in accordance with her character, says but little, though she gives a firm denial to the charge; this denial, however, avails her nothing against the apparently strong evidence. Thus the two lovers are rent asunder, and their tie seems to be forever destroyed; in agony both she and her parent beg for death.

The father at first believes in the guilt of his daughter — the proof seems decisive. But it is interesting to note those who refuse to put any

faith in the accusation. First comes Beatrice, then Benedick. The two whilom scoffers of love now assert the honor and fidelity of love in the person of Hero. Great, indeed, is their change, yet not unaccountable. Nay, the traducer of purity must be held to answer with his life — Beatrice forces her lover to vindicate the principle which is in him by sending a challenge to Claudio. The world for them is wholly altered, and from the witty assailants they have become the earnest defenders of the Family. It is a beautiful touch, and shows the transforming power of love: they read the honor and fidelity of Hero in their own, and have turned champions of injured purity — the very couple who formerly were in the habit of breaking their jests upon the faithlessness of man and woman.

The second defense of Hero is made by the Friar, who asserts her innocence against both accusers and parent. He is the religious man, who has spent his life in the contemplation of the good and holy till he feels their presence with the certainty of instinct. His calling leads him to lay greater stress upon the internal element of character than upon any external occurrence — which, he knows, may be the result of mere accident; he has far more faith in the intrinsic virtue of women than in the evidence of the senses. He is, therefore, certain that a mistake has been made somewhere; he has no

proof — but his observation, his divine lore, the judgment of his ripe age, declare the innocence of Hero; above all, he feels the deep truthfulness and purity of her nature in consonance with his own. It is the religious instinct which speaks in him. The Friar, therefore, is the fit mediator of the difficulty; he is to rescue the name of Hero from obloquy, and restore the broken bond of the Family. But at this point we pass to a new principle, and to a new grouping of characters.

3. (*a.*) The third and last thread of the second movement will include the mediating forces, which are now set to work, and which are of two kinds. First comes the Friar, who has a scheme which like the schemes of so many of Shakespeare's clergymen, is a deception — a pious fraud — practiced for the sake of gaining a good end. The reader may, perhaps, doubt whether such a man can be truly religious, and probably looks upon the preceding view of the character as altogether too highly colored. But it is the Poet's manner. The priest is the true mediator, who has to reconcile contradictions, conflicting principles, and hostile individuals; something has to give way, or strife will be perpetual. The scheme is to conceal Hero and spread abroad the rumor that she is dead; even the funeral ceremonies are to be performed over her grave. That will cause remorse to her accusers, and it will even be a proof of her innocence that dishonor

brings death. The worthy Friar wishes to prepare the heart of Claudio for repentance; softened by contrition, it will more willingly restore the former bond. Thus the mediator seeks, not only to vindicate the fair name of the woman, but also to bring back the former relation between the lovers. His end is seen to be of the truest and noblest, but he employs means which, though they bring happiness out of wretchedness, and re-establish a broken institution, violate the strict code of morality. But he seems unwilling to sacrifice the world to the outer semblance of truth; indeed, he would probably think that such a course itself would be the grossest violation of duty, and that adherence to a moral abstraction may sometimes become an act of immorality. The so-called Jesuitical maxim, that the end justifies the means, keeps everywhere troubling the reader of Shakespeare.

(*b.*) Religion has now contributed its influence for the rescue of injured innocence. The second form of mediation will be that known to the secular world, namely, justice. The State is the proper instrument for the punishment of the wrong inflicted on Hero; what is it doing to this end? But the very representatives of the State are victimized — are, in fact, the perpetrators of the outrage. The men high in power are light-headed and hasty; they have become, unintentionally it is true, the authors of the direst viola-

tion of right; their stupidity — or, at least, unfitness — is held out in glaring colors. What remains? Let the humblest officers of the law step in and accomplish what could not be done by their rulers. Dogberry and his associates are drawn in the most decided outlines of burlesque; ignorant pomposity, confusion in language, joined to a still greater confusion of thought and clownish stupidity, are combined to produce the broadest comic effects. But they possess one supreme trait — fidelity in office; this places them above their Prince, and they discover the villainy of which he is the dupe. They overhear one of the servants of Don John conversing about his share in the diabolical plot against Hero's good name; they have really not sense enough to understand the story, but they vaguely feel that they have come upon a piece of rascality, and so at once make the arrest of the scamps. The result is that the means of discovering the roguery is placed in the hands of Leonato; but he, the wise Governor, pays no attention to the information which most nearly concerns him and his child. The rude, but faithful, officials are dismissed to make the examination of the culprits at their leisure. Such are the comic instruments here employed. The reason for their employment seems to be hinted in a reply of Borachio, the arrested servant: "What your wisdom could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to

light." The contrast between the high and low officers is here expressly declared. Without the authority of the Poet himself, such an explanation would probably be deemed very far-fetched, and an absurd refinement on the plan of the drama. But, when he interprets his own work, we suppose that we shall have to submit.

The second movement has now come to an end, with its two contrary tendencies. There has been a transition from an intellectual separation of the sexes to a union in emotion; there has also been a transition from a union in emotion to an alienation; to heal the disruption both religious and secular forms of mediation have been introduced. If there is any lesson to be drawn from this part of the play, it is that intellect gives a more stable foundation for marriage than the sudden impulse of passion; Benedick and Beatrice could not have been torn asunder by the slander which was so fatal to Hero and Claudio.

III.

The third movement concentrates all the previous groups upon a single purpose, which is to remedy the sole remaining breach of the drama. Borachio confesses the whole scheme in its details—Hero is innocent. Claudio at once repents of his hasty action; his love returns in all its former intensity; "Thine image doth appear

in the rare semblance that I loved it first." He is ready to undergo any penalty for his sin — or, rather, mistake; he is willing to make his deed undone. Don Pedro, too, manifests an equal contrition for the share which he has had in the wrong of an innocent woman. Repentance is now their condition, which, in its fullest manifestation, is the struggle of the soul to wipe out its wicked action. Both take means for counteracting the slander, during all time to come, by placing an epitaph upon her tomb indicating her character. Still, their act was not intentional, though rash and blameworthy: hence their repentance cannot be prolonged, or their punishment severe. But their sorrow is genuine, and, hence, they are prepared for a restoration.

One of the penalties laid upon Claudio is that he should marry the niece of Leonato, since the daughter is dead. When she has approached him and removed her mask — behold, it is his Hero. The good Friar, anticipating just such an emergency, has concealed her in a religious house. Now he restores her to the first relation. Claudio also must obtain this reward; through repentance he has made his deed undone, as far as lies in his power. Dogberry, too, is recompensed for his faithfulness in office, though intellect and learning are not his possessions. Don John is the person who really deserves punishment, which awaits him in a triple form at the

hand of the Prince. The end is a double marriage, which is performed by the worthy Friar — the mediator of peace and union.

Thus the two pairs have traveled through the various obstacles, and are joined in the Family. They show two forms of interference with this institution. The misogamous pair, whose separation comes from within, and the wronged pair, whose separation comes from without — both equally must yield to the impulse of the domestic relation. The first are inherently comic; the second are not, though their difficulty is overcome mainly by a comic instrumentality. Disguise does not run through any one thread of the play, but its temporary employment in the form of masks, concealments, delusive shows, occurs in every portion. Fundamentally, therefore, it is not a comedy of Situation, but rather a comedy of Character, belonging to the involuntary phase — that is, the individuals are pursuing a comic end without intending it, even without knowing it. The distinction between the Romanic and Germanic elements is less marked, though observable. The Italian origin of part of the story is well known; Dogberry and his companions are rudely English; the thread of Benedick and Beatrice combines the intrigue of the one with the characterization of the other. The seriousness of the play, in its leading thread, still keeps it in the domain of Tragi-Comedy,

though hovering quite on the boundary line of Pure Comedy.

Thus this disguised world of Messina has come to a little clearness about itself, and, we may hope, will cease to pass its existence in wit and artifice. The play unfolds through four main disguises, each of which undoes the previous one. 1st. There is the mutual inner disguise of Beatrice and Benedick. 2d. This disguise is, however, torn off by the new disguise which Don Pedro and Claudio and the whole court prepare for the eaves-dropping Benedick; in like manner Hero successfully tears away the mask of wit in which Beatrice has concealed herself. 3d. This second set of disguisers are overlapped by the third set, composed of Borachio and Don John. Both Don Pedro and Claudio are tricked by a disguise, pretty much in the same way that they have just tricked Benedick; strange that they do not reflect that others can do what they have done. In like manner, Hero, who victimized Beatrice, is herself victimized in a far worse way. 4th. But this third set of disguisers are thwarted by the undisguised set, the officers, and an end is made to this series of confusions, false shows, and foolish hasty judgments.

The story of Hero, the innocent girl who is made the victim of appearances, which are met and counteracted by other appearances, whereby she is restored to her lover, is taken from Italian

romance. It is found in a poetic form in Ariosto; but Shakespeare probably derived his materials from Bandello, the Italian novelist, who had been translated into French by Belleforest. Several versions of the story from the poem, and probably a version of it from the novel, or from the French translation, had been made into English before the date of *Much Ado*. Also a play had been given in English on the same subject. Thus the story was probably familiar to Shakespeare's audience. But the characterization, structure, and ethical world are the poet's work. The composition of the play hovers around the year 1600, in which year it was first printed, and which may be taken as the period when Shakespeare's purely comic genius reaches its culmination, and begins to show strong signs of a counter-tendency.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

No certain trace of this play is found before the Folio of 1623, in which it is the twelfth of the comedies, and is divided into Acts, but not into Scenes. Francis Meres, author of the *Palladis Tamia*, which belongs to the year 1598, mentions among the comedies of Shakespeare, a *Love's Labor's Won*, alongside of *Love's Labor's Lost*. No such play is known; consequently, the attempt has often been made to identify it with some known play; in which attempt the most voices, critical and otherwise, have been given for *All's Well That Ends Well*. In this condition we may let the matter rest; it may be so or not so; but whether so or not, the result can have no bearing whatever upon the comprehension of the present play, which now has the most significant title possible.

Of greater import is the fact — first observed, as far as we are aware, by Coleridge — that there are two distinct Shakespearian styles in the play. A number of metrical passages show plainly his early manner, of which a good sample is the

rhymed dialogue between the King and Helena (Act II., Sc. I.), and the letter-sonnet (Act III., Sc. IV.). These passages in verse can easily be distinguished, especially if they are of some length; but the passages in prose which are supposed to betray his youthful style are far more doubtful. Taking the play as a whole, however, the careful reader will see that it belongs emphatically to the poet's mature period; that its atmosphere, its weight of thought, its grasp of the dramatic problem, in fine, its entire trend, is that of the poet's middle age; that the fragments of the early play or, what is more likely, the early sketch which was long afterwards taken up and completed, are but a few naked boulders scattered over the green landscape, hinting indeed to the practiced eye of a former geologic epoch, but in no sense changing the present one.

The true and best name for the play is *All's Well That Ends Well*, and there is no title in Shakespeare that suggests so completely the moral problem involved in the action. It turns upon the question as to how far the end will justify the means; or, in the language of the drama, Is all well that ends well? The very pith of Shakespeare, as also of practical life, lies in the ethical conflict between the instrumentalies to be employed, and the objects to be attained by employing them. Is evil never to be done that good

may come? If so, when, and when not? Let us state the question in a more exact form: Is the lesser good never to be sacrificed to the greater, in the case of an irreconcilable collision between them? Always, says Shakespeare. Is the greater good ever to be sacrificed to the lesser? Never, says Shakespeare. But what if the good to be sacrificed seems on a par with the good to be attained? Then the matter becomes a sort of an ethical puzzle, about which people will divide into two opposite camps. Such a puzzle is the play of *All's Well That Ends Well;* the good to be used and the good to be reached seem to cancel each other; the means and the end are in a sort of balance which the impartial judgment suffers not to descend on either side.

Helena is the character in whom these moral contradictions are sharpened to the point of absolute hostility; her end and her means remain to the last in sorest opposition. Though chaste in her object she is unchaste in her method; she seeks to save domestic purity by an act of impurity. She is the woman who makes her own husband disloyal in intention, but loyal in deed, makes him consciously corrupt, but unconsciously true. This opposition between the conscious and unconcious acts of the husband Bertram is set forth by the poet in the dialogue between the King

and Diana, the latter being the instrument of Helena: —

> *King:* Wherefore hast thou accused him all this while?
> *Diana:* Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty.
> He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to it,
> I'll swear I am a maid and he knows not.

What he knows and what he does not know make the moral collision — guilty in purpose, innocent in fact. It is the wife who has thrown the husband into this collision, yet with the design of saving him, the very violation of Family she turns to the means of fulfilling the function of the Family. Husband and wife show the two obverse sides of the one leading question; her intention is good, but her act very dubious; his intention is bad, but his act, taken by itself, proper. It is clear that Helena has not the introspective nature, she is not much worried with moral scruples, she sees the good end, takes the direct means without questioning them, and completes the act. In this respect she is in striking contrast to Hamlet, who remains everlastingly caught in the struggle between conscience and the deed. On the contrary she shows an affinity with Shakespeare's great heroes of action like Henry the Fifth. But she can endure supremely as well as act, she also shows the woman's faith repeatedly, a reliance upon the world-order which is to supplement both the individual deed and patience.

In Helena we clearly see the outlines one of Shakespeare's great mediatorial women, but placed in a more trying situation than any of them. They all have and must have a common trait — a deeply reconciling spirit, which can see the lesser and surrender it for the greater; they disguise, prevaricate, fib openly, circumvent parent and even the law, to reach the higher end. Formal truth of every kind they immolate for their great ethical object, which is usually the healing of some disruption in the Family; in general, they sacrifice the Moral to the Institutional. All of them do thus — Portia, Rosalind, Viola, Imogen, down to Anne Page; we follow them with delight and applaud in them just this strength which gives them mastery over their life's problem. But when we come to Helena we call a halt, and ask, Is not that which she sacrifices a higher spiritual good than the end attained? Is the price worth the purchase, and does not mediation for once cut off its own head?

In this dualism we have to leave the character, and we are inclined to think that the poet himself intended her to be left just there. She is the extreme, she knows her own trend, and has the adage on her lips, All's well that ends well; she repeats it, and both times she sinks the means out of sight in the end; it clearly states the principle to which she squares her life. In her case mediation through the woman has touched the point of

self-negation, and can be pushed no further without making her tragic.

In this play there is a comic element, but it is not paramount; the earnest side of the action constitutes the larger and more important portion. The divisions should now be called the serious and comic threads; whereas, in Pure Comedy, they are named the high and low comic threads. Upon this foundation the contrast is different, and, indeed, more profound; the sober and the sportive phases of life are brought together, instead of two distinct sportive phases. Nor is the solid ground of reality abandoned — that is, no ideal realm is introduced in order to solve the conflict. Still, it has the essential form of the Mediated Drama, in which a disruption of family or society is healed and a restoration takes place, ending in the union of the separated members. On the whole, the coloring is rather somber, and, at times, unpleasant, though not without many light hues playing around the picture.

The action lies in the Family, and mainly after marriage. The husband is forced to marry against his will; thus one element of true union is wanting, namely, reciprocated affection. The wife alone possesses the emotional element at the beginning. The course of the drama will show how she succeeds in winning the love of her spouse, and thus placing the Family on its true foundation. The woman is here seen pursuing

the object which, for her, is the highest and most worthy; the domestic institution is her supreme end. It is her pertinacity and her devotion which rescue and secure the endangered bond. The ethical movement is, therefore, from a marriage resting on unrequited affection to a marriage resting on requited affection; it is the man who is wanting in the proper emotion, and it is the woman who not only possesses it herself, but also excites it in the bosom of her husband.

Thus the theme is beautiful and noble, but its treatment is the great point of dispute. Helena, whose name calls up in the play that of Helen of Troy, seems to be too much of a husband-seeker to be agreeable to her own sex — who demand, in theory at least, that the man do the wooing. Still, after being married, she pursues her truest object — the reconciliation of her husband. But, as already indicated that which gives the greatest offense is the means which she employs to effect her purpose. She is, in the highest degree, a will-character; she is determined to carry out her purpose; no ordinary punctillo can stop her. Still it must not be forgotten that her end is no mere individual whim, but the supreme end of female nature, namely, the true existence of the Family.

The action, being mediatorial, naturally falls into three main movements. The first portrays the love of Helena for Bertram — who does not

requite it — and their forced marriage; for the King commands, and the mother favors, the match; but Bertram, under the advice of his evil genius, Parolles, refuses to submit. The second movement shows the separation of the pair, through the flight of Bertram and his apparently impossible conditions of union; but Helena fulfills the conditions with success on the one hand, and on the other hand Bertram discovers and gets rid of his evil genius, and is thus prepared for a return both to country and family. The third movement is the restoration, which exhibits the punishment and repentance of Bertram, and its culmination lies in the complete unity of affection of husband and wife.

I.

1. The drama is not as complex as is customary with Shakespeare. The central figure is Helena, from the beginning, and the minor threads are somewhat disjointedly developed. She employs as her instruments two leading groups; the one is at Rousillon, headed by the Countess, mother of Bertram; the other at Paris, headed by the King. Thus the two institutions — Family and State — come to her aid through their representatives. She has been brought up by the Countess of Rousillon, who has treated her as a mother treats her own child. The son of the Countess, Bertram, has also been reared in the same household;

thus the two have seen each other from infancy, and, on the part of Helena, the relation has resulted in a deep and intense love. With this love the drama starts. Helena is proud of the memory of her dead father, who was an eminent physician, but his image has been crowded out of her mind by that of Bertram. The latter, however, has now gone to the French court, at Paris; this separation Helena cannot endure; she must overcome the obstacle in some way. Here we acquire the first insight into her character.

At the end of the first scene her soliloquy strikes the key-note of her conduct. She has the fullest faith in self-determinaton; she believes that our remedies lie in ourselves, and not in any external power — not even in heaven, which "gives us free scope." Our designs fail because we ourselves are to blame. Her resolution is heroic. She almost denies that there is anything impossible; it is only lack of purpose in men. Such she declares to be her conviction, and we may now expect proportionate deeds. But the special article of her faith, which is applicable to her present case, is that merit will always master love; that she can win Bertram by her desert, whatever the opposition may be:

> "Impossible be strange attempts to those
> That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose
> What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove
> To show her merit that did miss her love?"

Here we see the female will-character more strongly manifested than it is in Portia even. It will not lack opportunities for the severest trial hereafter.

Already a problem is before her; love demands the presence of its dear object — Bertram is away. By what means can her longing eyes be brought to rest upon him again? She is ready at once with a plan — a plan, however, which intends not to be satisfied with mere vision, but which proposes to reach the full fruition of love in marriage. The King is sick with a mortal malady, as is supposed, and has been given up by his physicians. She has a prescription, left by her father, which will exactly meet the case. Off she starts for Paris, after having revealed the whole matter to her foster-mother — the good Countess — who, though doubtful of the success of the project, yields to the strong determination of Helena, and gives consent to the journey. The mother, too, exhibits no objection to the alliance of her son with the poor orphan.

Great is Helena's success at the court; she completely cures the King, who, in his gratitude, offers to her in marriage the choice of any nobleman in attendance upon him. Bertram is there — her selection is, hence, easy and speedy. But he protests, his main ground of refusal being difference of rank. The King, however, answers

his argument by placing merit above birth, and is ready to confer upon her a noble title; his utterances are the more effective on this head, since his descent is so much higher than Bertram's. Still, the latter is not persuaded, and says that he cannot love her, and will not strive to love her. Then the Monarch employs his authority and commands the marriage to take place. The young man apparently submits, takes the hand of his bride, and is married that night.

It will be seen that Helena has on her side both the mother and the King, who represent, respectively, the institutions of the Family and the State. The two persons of highest rank, authority, and experience agree in preferring merit to birth; they accept the poor physician's daughter as their worthy peer — the one admits her to relationship, the other to nobility. Bertram cannot well resist such powers; he can get rid of them only by flight.

Bertram is a young nobleman — a little wild, but not inherently mean or vicious. He possesses courage, and is proud of his aristocratic lineage, but is inexperienced, and is not hard to lead astray. The possibility of his appreciating Helena is never lost; there is no ingrained diabolism in his nature. That which causes him to stumble is bad company and bad advice, which are concentrated in his favorite friend and attend-

ant, Parolles. To the worthless character of this man Bertram is at first utterly blind; and it is the second thread of the drama which exhibits the gradual unmasking of Parolles, so that even Bertram sees his real nature.

2. Parolles, therefore, should be viewed in his proper connection with the play. He is the evil principle which must be eliminated before restoration is possible. His character seems to be well understood by all except his victim. He is a liar, coward, braggart, and libertine. His first talk with Helena, in which he argues against virginity, reveals a leading trait. The scenes with old Lafeu show both his boasting and his cowardice. A punishment is in store for him, wherein his baseness and perfidy will receive their penalty, after being fully revealed. Upon the advice of such a counselor Bertram resolves to flee from France and enter the Florentine war, which was then breaking out. At home he can no longer remain, with both institutions against him. Yet he has good ground of complaint — the act of the King in forcing the marriage was arbitrary and unjust. The right of love, in his case at least, was violated, which right the Poet always vindicates for woman. His flight, therefore, has its justification, though not for any reason given by Parolles; his return must take place through his own free will.

It will be noticed that the Clown performs his

usual duty of giving a comic reflection of the leading theme. He, too, wants to get married; his rude jests always pertain to the sensual side of marriage. A certain Isabel is his lady-love, whom, however, he wishes to change off after he has been to court. The Clown's part is here very slight; he is mainly a messenger, who must be joined to the group around the Countess of Rousillon.

II.

1. The second movement starts with this separation of man and wife. Bertram has gone, and in departing has imposed certain conditions upon Helena which he deems it impossible for her to fulfill. But little does he imagine the deep cunning and strong will of her whom he rejects. She will accomplish his supposed impossibilities without his knowing it; her only way of success is to bring him, unconsciously, to fulfill his own conditions. For this purpose she slips away from her home, after leaving a written request that the Countess should induce her fugitive son to return as soon as possible. She gives out that she is going to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Jacques, and she leaves the people at home with an impression to this effect.

But her object becomes manifest when we next find her at Florence, whither young Bertram has returned, after having obtained great fame and

honor in the war. Indeed, she has spied out the very means of accomplishing her purpose, and is about to set it in motion. This is the young maiden, Diana, whom "the amorous count solicits in the unlawful purpose." Bertram, under the guidance of Parolles, seems to be leading the life of a gay libertine at Florence; the snare is laid for him through this weakness — he is caught through his lust. That such an act should be done by Helena is repugnant — is the great blot on the play. Her end is a true one and a most noble one — it is to restore the disrupted relation between her husband and herself. But her instrumentality is offensive in a very strong degree, and casts a dark shade upon her character. It is true that there is no violation of chastity on her part, but she is willing to make her husband believe that there is, and thereby cause him, unconsciously, to fulfill the conditions prescribed by himself. As far as his will is concerned, it is an act of incontinence, of which he is the intentional instrument, and of which she reaps the reward. Shakespeare has made his heroines perform many deeds of doubtful morality for the sake of love; they lie, run away from home, violate the will of parents, put on disguises, and deceive in every possible manner; but Helena outstrips them all, for she, in order to be married, is ready to destroy what seems to be almost the very foundation of marriage.

Diana and her mother are easily induced to lend their aid, when they learn that Helena is really a wife, and her object is restoration to her husband. She has, therefore, succeeded completely in this second attempt; Bertram's requirements are fulfilled, but he is as far removed from her as before, for the restoration can be complete only through the conscious purpose. But already a change has taken place in the external surroundings of Bertram, which will prepare him for an internal change, and render a new life possible. This is the discovery which he makes of his evil genius, Parolles. Here a new thread begins, which runs through the second movement, and which may now be taken up and unfolded.

2. Parolles has had his character described already; it is well known to Helena and also to the Countess, who regrets his influence over her son. But it is old Lafeu who has discovered his inherent cowardice, and has the boldness to warn Bertram against trusting him too far. Still, the young Count disregards the admonition, and takes Parolles with himself to Florence, where the evil influence of such a companion is plainly indicated in the way of lustful indulgence. Bertram is, however, a man of courage; now his friend is to be shown to him as a coward. An ambush is laid for Parolles, when he pretends to return to the field for his lost drum; he is seized

by some soldiers, and is deceived into believing that he is a prisoner of the enemy. Blindfolded, he is brought into the presence of Bertram, and asked certain questions. All his mean traits are at once unmasked before the eyes of his astonished friend; his lying, treacherous and cowardly nature is revealed beyond a doubt. This is the end of their friendship.

Bertram has now discovered and got rid of his evil genius, and largely of the evil element of his own character. For he was easily influenced, and, indeed, was the victim of bad company. His instincts were generous and honorable. But, like many young men of rank, he fell into the hands of a pander. Now his true nature is free to work itself out and exhibit its proper traits. It is noticed that the letter of his mother produced upon him a deep impression — almost changed him into another man. He has also heard of the rumor of Helena's death, of which he was the cause; he confesses that he is mourning for her. Such are the influences which are now working, unobstructed, upon his soul; no Parolles is standing in the way. The result of the second movement, therefore, is that Bertram has been unconsciously fulfilling the conditions of marriage. The first condition, which may be called the external one, is fulfilled through the device of Helena; but the second condition, which may be called the internal one, can be seen

in the gradual preparation of his mind for a return of the old relations — in the softening of his hatred toward Helena into genuine affection.

III.

The third movement shows a change of place, which corresponds to the spiritual change — all parties have returned home to France. Bertram appears in the presence of his mother and the King, he confesses his repentance for his deed, and obtains reconciliation. Thus the institutional world, from which he had torn himself away, receives him back to its bosom, after he has manifested adequate contrition for the past. Also, a new alliance with the daughter of Lafeu is in process of negotiation, and it is a good sign of his mental condition that he receives coldly the proposal. But it is manifest that the restoration will be incomplete till he be restored to Helena, and find out what she has done for the sake of their union.

Bertram has already declared that her devotion and death have changed his former dislike into love; he has also expressed repentance for his harsh treatment of her. Thus it will be seen that his emotion is now, for the first time, ready for the Family. The main instrument for this purpose is again the disguised Diana, who here appears before the King demanding justice

against Bertram. The upshot of the matter is that her disguise has to be revealed. The device of Helena, who now steps forth on the scene, is made known; Bertram sees that his conditions, which he deemed impossible, are fulfilled; this is, however, only a new evidence of her devotion. But it must not be forgotten that already he has declared his love — which is the true basis of their union, and not this external stratagem of which he was the unconscious victim, and which shows only the extent of her sacrifice. Thus the restoration is complete; Bertram is restored to the king, mother, wife. But the main success is that of Helena. She has not only brought back her husband, when he had fled beyond the reach of maternal and regal authority, but also she has conquered his internal nature, and brought him under the yoke of love.

Thus we behold in this comedy as in the others the Separation, Mediation, Restoration; also the serious and the comic threads. Parolles, who furnishes the chief comic element, has often been compared to Falstaff; the affair of the drum finds its counterpart in the exploit of the Fat Knight at Gadshill; in character also the two have a number of similar points. The Poet's use of Disguise is noteworthy throughout the play, a man like Parolles lives in a state of continuous falsehood and concealment; his mask has to be stripped off by another mask; Disguise

is served up to itself. Helena has to assume the garb of a pilgrim and hide herself in many forms of untruth in order to bring forth truth. The world of appearance dances before our eyes in pleasing delusion, but it is a lie to which man and woman must give the lie, destroying it through itself. Says a character in this play: —

> Only in this disguise I think it no sin
> To cozen him that would unjustly win.

The grand masquerade of delusive shapes is unmasked at last and the real essence of things is shown; this process of unmasking through a new mask is the comic play of circumstance and character, and we see the whole world of Disguise in all its shapes of folly, delusion, falsehood, and appearance, uncovered by Disguise, and revealing what is eternal and true.

In this drama also we discern the commingling of Romanic and Teutonic elements. The serious, elevated portion, which is chiefly written in verse, is of Italian origin, and is taken from a novel by Boccaccio, which was translated into English before Shakepeare's time and printed in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566). The comic portion is, as far as known, Shakespeare's invention; he has added the characters of Parolles and the Clown, as well as Lafeu and the Countess. The story of Bertram and Helena, which is Boccaccio's, shows little characterization in the original, but it furn-

ishes the scaffolding upon which the Poet arranges his characters. He makes out of them a living varied world, which also has its incident or history. An interesting trait of Helena, found in the novel but hardly brought out in Shakespeare, is the healing power of woman who is celebrated in many a ballad and legend as skilled in medicine and even in surgery. In early times among Gothic and Celtic peoples ladies of rank were famous leeches and healers. (See Percy's Reliques, I, 1, 4.) This suggests her mediatorial function; in Shakespeare's comedies she is the chief spiritual healer.

As Schlegel has remarked, old age has received superb treatment in the present play. There are in fact so many old people in it that it takes a special color from their presence. No less than four, the King, the Countess, Lafeu and the Florentine Widow; all of them have a common attribute, they appreciate Helena, are brilliant reflectors of her merit, as she is not inclined to blow her own trumpet. Age with its calm wisdom is essentially appreciative, and loves to see the worth of youth, since the time of rivalry is past. But after reflecting the central figure in common, these old people are strongly individualized. The King is a sufferer, and shows a sweet patience, though quite impatient of wrong and folly; but chiefly he has transcended kingship itself and prefers merit to birth. In like

manner the good Countess is stronger than the limits of rank; most motherly, too, she is toward her orphan charge, and enters sympathetically into the young woman's love, siding with her against her own son; a woman of noble birth, but nobler than birth. Lafeu, the susceptible old man, a courtier, yet hater of shams, full of gallantry and sincerity — how he delights to set off Helena in his rhapsodies! Fond of his jest, he is in earnest; when most polite we believe him most; ceremony has not quenched, but preserves his sympathy.

The four main women of this play show a common trait; they all have artifice, disguise, intrigue, yet with a good purpose beyond these weapons. They are match-makers, they overcome obstacles by deceit, "lawful deceit," as one of them names it. Herein again they all reflect Helena as well as the thought of the play — the moral antagonism between means and end. After Helena the most daring woman in this way is Diana, who employs her skill in a very critical situation, and who gains the admiration of the King for her deed:

> **Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.**

She has the compound of audacity and modesty, of romantic adventure and ethical purpose, which is the stuff of which Shakespeare makes his heroines. But we must notice, that if she helps,

she is helped even more; though a means for another, she is a still better means for herself; previously impoverished, she can now marry with a handsome dower. The Florentine Widow, the mother of Diana, gives her assent when she hears the plan, deeming the deception "lawful," because of its end; she applauds when old what she would have done when young. Even the Countess is not without a touch of the same trait, though in her case it is withdrawn into the background; for is it not the part of the good mother to be a good match-maker?

Thus every character leads back to Helena as the central figure, and, to a degree repeats her spiritual image. Bertram has to develop up to her, and reflect her too in his appreciation; he starts in bitter antagonism, and lays all stress upon birth. But his experience of life, especially his military career, has brought out his own merit to his eye, and has placed it above his rank; he is now ready to see worth in another, is ready to recognize Helena, like the rest of the world. She has seen this possibility in him from the start, and persists in not only loving him, but in being the Providence to save him. The strength of her affection and its necessity to her spring from the fact that the two were reared together from childhood; thus her love has gradually grown to be life itself. The best thing about Bertram is that he develops.

Helena also shows a continuous unfolding through the play, often in a surprising manner. When she first confesses her passion to the Countess she says: —

> I know I love in vain, strive against hope —
> Thus Indian-like
> Religious in mine error, I adore
> The sun, that looks upon his worshiper
> But knows of him no more.

From this we might think she has despaired; not a bit of it; under resignation is just the green sprout of hope. And when she takes the pilgrim's garb, we might think she has given up her passion, and may turn nun. Nay, nay; she has a very different thought under that religious disguise; she is to make her husband fulfill "the great prerogative and rite of love" in spite of himself. She manifestly develops into three supreme qualities, Patience, Activity, Trust; she can endure, yet act, and then commit the whole to Providence, saying, "All's well that ends well." What a lofty and even mighty character! Still the doubt will rise about her means, and the dualism again enters in spite of admiration. She knows it, Shakespeare knows it; listen to her and his reflections on the plot to entrap the husband; that plot

> Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
> And lawful meaning in a lawful act,
> Where both not sin and yet a sinful fact;
> But let's about it.

Here the poet gives the idea of his own play, in its moral contradiction. But no reflection, "let's about it;" Helena cuts short the possible rising scruple by the deed.

It may be questioned whether such a subject, though of great psychological and ethical interest, is suitable for art. It leaves us unreconciled; we stand in a jar between the moral and institutional order; we commend the end and condemn the means. It is curious to see what the various critics have thought. Coleridge calls Helena "the loveliest of Shakespeare's female characters." But he saw only one side of her, the one healthy bloom ing cheek; her paralytic side he did not see. Gervinus defends her gallantly, by dwelling on her end and slurring over the means; he complains, however, that his female readers will not accept his explanation, though it be indisputable. Doubtless he is right; few women will take Helena into their society, though the men defend her. Still a woman, Mrs. Jameson, has greeted her with warm approval. But we cannot help thinking that in this drama the Poet's art, which has elsewhere brought to harmony such profound conflicts, has not succeeded altogether; his ethical world shows a deep fissure which divides it into two unreconciled portions.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

This play is the culmination of the comic period of Shakespeare. He had written comedies before it appeared, but now he pushes up to the height; he makes the very principle of comedy into a comedy which shares in the movement of the world's history. It is last in the list of Francis Meres, and the date of its composition hovers nigh to the year 1598, when the Poet had reached his happiest comic development. It may well be placed as the keystone in the arch of his fifteen comedies.

Better than any other play of the Poet, the *Merchant of Venice* shows us the soul of his comic world. It is a mediated drama in the profoundest sense, portraying the mediation of man in pictures taken from the very body of Time. The Jewish and the Christian worlds are placed alongside of each other, are shown in conflict, are shown in transition; the one passes into the other through the doctrine of Mercy, which is not only stated in the poem, but is employed as the grand

mediatorial instrument. Thus the mightiest event of human history, the mediation of the individual, whereby he escapes from a tragic fate, is made into a comedy, in the Shakespearian sense of the word. And what is that sweep of history from antiquity into Christianity, but a great mediated drama? There is the dark, threatening, tragic element; man seems fated, but he is rescued, and the end is happy. The heart of history, warm and palpitating, is taken out of its temporal wrappage, and held up before us in a representation which is the diversion of an evening.

It is not, then, so much for its mere literary merit, which is of the highest order; not so much for its technical dramatic excellence, which is also great, that we are going to study this play; it is for its theme, for its idea. Yet the task is not simple, as is manifest by the difference of opinion which reigns among the greatest commentators in regard to this idea. Take, for example, three chief German writers on Shakespeare. Kreyssig, though not wholly consistent in his statements, doubts whether there be any single thought which will unite the diverse elements of the play. Gervinus says the Poet intends to portray the relation of man to property; this is, indeed, one thread of the drama, but not the only one, nor does it contain the thought which unifies the work. Ulrici has beheld in it the dialectic nature of abstract right; formal justice, pushed to

excess, becomes its own opposite, and turns to wrong. It was Ulrici who first applied to the play the legal maxim: *Summum jus, summa injuria*. He goes still further, and shows that the Poet, on account of the contradictory nature of right, introduces the doctrine of Mercy, which is the reconciling principle. In this instance, and in many instances, Ulrici has a deeper insight into Shakespeare than any other commentator; around his view the exposition of the present drama must turn either by way of acceptance or denial. Ulrici, however, in his excellent remarks (*Shakespeare's Dramatische Kunst Zweiter Theil, s. 332, et seq.*), seems to lay stress upon the conflict of justice, and not upon its mediation, though he certainly suggests the latter. We, however, shall seek to emphasize the mediatorial element, as it reveals itself both in the characters and in the whole society of which they are a part. For it is mediation which makes comedy in general, and it is the special manner of mediation which makes this particular comedy.

In the *Merchant of Venice*, accordingly, we behold a conflicting and reconciling element. The conflicting element is mainly the contest between Antonio and Shylock, and is to be considered first; we are to behold the dramatic economy ordered to this end, and to watch how every incident contributes either to call forth

their struggle, or to harmonize it after it has arisen. A glance at the leading events of the play will shew that this conflict is the one central point from which the entire action radiates — which organizes and vivifies the whole piece. The incidents relating to Portia, which, at the first look, seem somewhat remote from the main action, are the reconciling part, and bring forth, in fact, the profoundest mediation of the drama. Bassanio loves Portia, and applies to his friend, Antonio, the wealthy merchant, for the money to carry on his courtship in a suitable style of magnificence. For magnificent it must be since it requires such a large amount of money, and, besides, it appears already to have exhausted his own purse. In this fact we see the motive for the account of such an elaborate wooing. Shakespeare has brought before us lords and princes, with grand retinues, suing for the hand of the fair Portia. To compete with these, Bassanio has to apply to the merchant for the ducats. But the merchant's ventures are all at sea; he has not the cash on hand, hence he must go to the money-lender. This brings him into contact with the Jew, and the main circumstances of the play are thereafter rapidly developed. Thus Portia was indirectly the cause of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew, and, in ideal justice, the Poet makes her the instrumentality by which Antonio is released. Even the inci-

dents of the last Act, which take place after the culmination of the play, are logically necessary for the harmonization of the lesser contradictions which have been called forth by the main struggle. Every part must be rounded off with the perfection of art; no shreds are left to draggle from the edges of this well-woven garment. The Poet is like the sculptor, who finishes the finger-nail as exquisitely, in its way, as he does the face — the expression of intelligence.

The general movement of the play, therefore, lies in the conflict between the right of Property and the existence of the Individual, and in the mediation of this conflict through the Family, which owes its origin, in the present case, to that same individual whom it rescues. That is, the Family, represented by Portia, the wife, returns and saves the man who aided, by his friendship and generosity, to bring it into being. All the characters of the play, though possessing peculiarities of their own, must be seen in their relation to this fundamental theme of the work.

There are three essential movements, which may be named in order: the Conflict, the Mediation, the Return. Of the first movement there are two threads, showing, respectively, the Property-conflict and the Love-conflict, though the former is raised to the highest spiritual significance by the underlying religious element. These two threads, moreover, are interwoven in

the subtlest manner; still, an analysis has to tear them asunder temporarily. In the first thread the antagonists are Antonio, the Christian, and Shylock, the Jew. Antonio is the center of a group of five friends, who, in a variety of ways, ingraft themselves upon the action; around Shylock also are to be placed his daughter, Jessica, his clownish servant, Gobbo — both of whom are leaving him and going over to his opponents — and his friend, Tubal. The contrast between the two men in these personal relations is this: Antonio is the object of the warmest friendship, while Shylock is disrupting his own family — driving away daughter and servant. The second thread unfolds the Love-conflict, which has here three phases, represented by Portia, Jessica, and Nerissa. The second movement — the Mediation — has the same two threads — the Property-conflict is brought to a successful conclusion by Portia, disguised as a lawyer; the Love-conflict has ended in all three cases with a happy solution, namely, marriage. But both friends and lovers have been torn asunder in the performance of their various functions; hence the third movement will be the Return, which brings all to Belmont — the blissful abode of harmony.

I.

The first movement, accordingly, unfolds the realm of conflict in its double phase. Two legal

documents are introduced, which, in their very right are violating right; in both, the outer realized Law is turning against the inner Law not yet realized in forms of legality. These two documents are the testament of Portia's father, and the Jew's contract with Antonio. We see Justice and Equity, which ought to remain one and in harmony, to divide and to be set against each other; Law, which should protect, is made to assail its most precious trusts. It is a dualism which cuts to the heart of man as well as of social order. The life of the individual is assailed by the right which guards it; the Family is disregarded by forcing it to submit in its inner essence to what seems an outer accident.

1. We shall start with the conflict between Antonio and Shylock, which we have called, in a general way, the Property-conflict. Each of these men has a good and a bad side to his character, though in different degrees. The question, therefore, arises — what do they respectively represent? What principles does each one maintain? For men, without some great motive lying at the basis of their action and giving color to their endeavor, can have no interest for us. It is the conflict of these principles, represented and carried into execution by men, that excites our sympathy, our fear, our delight. The first thing which we find much stress laid upon is that Shylock is a Jew — a circumstance which should

excite our careful consideration. The Poet evidently intends to portray the Jewish character, or rather the Jewish consciousness, in one of its manifestations. Antonio's religion is not specially dwelt upon, but he is called a Christian, which is also the faith of those around him. The Jew thus finds himself in a Christian world, acting and dealing with men of a strange race and strange morality, and with ends in life far different from his own. Hence the possibility of a conflict, both of nationalities and of moralities. The collision, therefore, which supplies the nerve of the play, may be stated, in a general form, to be between Christianity and Judaism.

But mark! it is not between these religions as dogmatic systems of Theology, but as realized in the practical life of men. Antonio is a Christian — not that he goes to church and makes long prayers and daily rehearses the creed; he does none of these things as far as we know; but a general spirit of brotherhood and generosity animates all his actions, with one very striking exception; a liberality, which we may fairly call Christian, is ingrained into his very nature, and is the well-spring of his conduct in his dealings with his fellow-men. On the contrary, Shylock exhibits Judaism, as it must influence the doings of those who act according to its principle, though there is, in his portraiture, an element foreign to Judaism, which must not be

forgotten. To be sure, the religious phase is brought into more prominence in his character than in Antonio's, but only for the purpose of showing the moral consequences of that system of belief. Shylock carries out in his life the faith that is in him, with the utmost logical rigor and bitterness.

And here we desire to lay stress upon an important fact. Shakespeare has nowhere, in any of his dramas, made religion, *as such*, the principal motive. This was, no doubt, intentional on his part, for no man understood the concrete nature of religion — religion as determining the conduct of mankind — better than he. In this form he uses it continually. But, to make men die for an abstract principle of Theology, Shakespeare utterly refused — and he was right. For we all say that religion means nothing unless carried out in life, and just there Shakespeare seizes it — religion in action. But then, in this sphere, the religious form vanishes; for a man may be of the highest worth and integrity, and still refuse to conform to the required observances. Who can tell the difference betwcen such a man and the most worthy church-member, in their actions towards their fellow-men? Now, the Drama represents just this — man in action. Hence, if it be universal, it must take, not the religious, but the ethical, basis — for all men recognize *that*.

A number of poets of very high rank have tried to embody a religious theme in the drama — as Calderon, Corneille, and Massinger. But the judgment of mankind has not pronounced these efforts the highest products of Dramatic Art. In fact, the real religious Drama is found in the old miracle plays, and it has always been considered a great advance in dramatic form when that kind of plays disappeared into the regular Drama. This progress is an historical fact; the old Mysteries and Moralities, with their abstract virtues, their demons and angels, devils and gods, in general — with their wholly external way of representation — developed into motives and ends, into freedom, into Shakespeare. For he puts the demon and the angel inside of man where they belong. No longer is a human being lured on to a deed, which he seemingly cannot help, by some irresistible power outside of his own nature. This, then, is the difficulty with the religious Drama: In its machinery — or, if you please, in its mediations — the self-determination of man is obscured, and often lost. Hence this form of the Drama has disappeared with the advancing consciousness of Freedom, and Shakespeare has taken special pains to discard it in all its forms.

But to return. It was said that the collision existed between Christianity and Judaism, not as dogmatic systems of Theology, but as realized in the practical life of men. They are thus internal,

subjective, and determine human conduct. It is the conflict of two hostile moralities, and the struggle is ethical rather than religious. We feel that the consciousness of the two men is entirely different; that their notions of right and wrong are, in many respects, directly opposite. Shylock cannot help being a Jew in character any more than being a Jew in nationality. He is no vulgar villain; he acts according to his end in life; given his moral basis, his deeds must follow. He is not altogether a comic character; on the contrary, he belongs in part to Tragedy, for he is the bearer of one of the two great colliding principles, and it is his principle which has gone down in history, and which must again go to the wall in every conflict with the profounder phases of modern spirit. We see the destiny impending over him; but he yields — as the Jews always have done — and is preserved. The Poet has thus made him the type of his race, which avoids the life-and-death collision; for, like him, the Jew has lived among all nations without being swallowed up. He possesses that happy admixture of stubbornness and submission which has kept him from being destroyed on the one hand, and from being absorbed on the other.

The cause of this strange preservation lies in the nature of the Jewish faith; it is not for all men, but for the peculiar people of God. Hence it is not a religion of propagandism, and thus

avoids any struggle with dominant systems. Still, it maintains its individuality, and has a tenacity which can spring only from the profoundest conviction — or rather, in its most stubborn forms, from a complete limitation of Intelligence, beyond which the Hebrew mind refuses to pass. Thus we see renewed, though in a different way, the contest which took place 1800 years ago, on the plains of Judea — the contest which forms, perhaps, the most important period in history, and upon the result of which our entire modern civilization has turned. No wonder, then, that this play has been so popular, and has said so much to mankind, when the content of the modern world, and the momentous struggle for its existence, loom up in the background. We cannot help noting again what permanent and universal themes the Poet seizes upon as materials for his all-comprehensive genius; for here it is the collision between two of the greatest world-historical epochs — between the old and new dispensation — which lays the imperishable foundation of the play.

But this statement of the collision between Judaism and Christianity is still too abstract, and, hence, we next ask — what is the content of these two systems of religion, especially in their influence upon the practical life of mankind? What objects do these two men place before themselves, to be attained by their living?

In other words, what is their end in life? This gives the central point—the germinal unit—from which all action springs. Antonio is a merchant, but it is plain that his end in life is not money, nor can it be any Christian's. Antonio's purse is open to all his friends. He is the center of a jolly crowd of good fellows, though he himself is inclined to be melancholy. In such a position we can easily see it is not difficult to get rid of money. A deeper phase of his moral nature is his hatred of usury. He has relieved many a poor victim from the clutches of Shylock, and has denounced the meanness and cruelty of the latter, on the Rialto, with extremest vehemence. He realizes, in the highest sense of the expression, that man is above property—that is enough to show his Christianity. Money is to him only a means—a means of enjoyment for himself and friends on the one hand, and for helping his fellow-mortals on the other. On this side of his character Antonio is truly merciful; he is the practical embodiment of the holy declaration—"without charity I am nothing." Christianity always insists upon the neighbor, who has the same rights as yourself; he is a person as well as yourself, in the thought of universal Reason, or, as Holy Writ saith, "in the sight of God." Nay, more; its cardinal doctrine is Mercy—which means that man, within certain limits, is to be shielded from the

consequences of his deeds. Man is a finite being — God made him so — and, in so far as he is finite, he cannot be held responsible for the results of his actions. He is ignorant, and, hence, liable to err; Mercy says that he shall not suffer for his mistakes. But he is also weak, and, hence, liable to transgress; Mercy says that he must receive pardon if the transgression be repented of. Here the conflict arises. Justice demands rigid accountability; it asserts that man must be responsible for all his acts, while Mercy tries to shield even the crouching criminal.

The Poet himself utters these thoughts not merely in image and deed, but in an abstract form, and puts them specially into the mouth of Portia, the mediatorial character. She discourses of Mercy, like a clergyman: "The quality of Mercy is not strained;" she calls it "an attribute of God himself," and contrasts it with Justice. "We do pray for Mercy," an evident allusion to the Lord's prayer — "and that same prayer doth teach us all to render deeds of Mercy." Thus the sermon ends with an appeal to the Mediator himself and his principle, showing that the Poet had both in mind while writing this play. The conflict between the two religions is directly stated: "Therefore, Jew, though Justice be thy plea," there is something higher than Justice, else "none of us would see salvation." In such manner the Poet discusses the abstract

ideas of Mercy and Justice, upon which his play turns, and therein becomes also the critical expositor of his own poem.

Antonio's mishap was no doubt his own fault; he had no business to give such a bond, one thinks, since it seems that his credit was good in Venice, and he might have obtained the money by other means. But his case deserves the commiseration of his fellow-mortals, especially since he made a mistake merely, and did not commit a transgression. Besides, he probably could not think, with his consciousness, that even the Jew would proceed to such extreme measures. Of Antonio we may say that in the main his life has been a practical embodiment of Mercy; now, in his present extremity, he deserves Mercy. But he does not get it; on the contrary, he hears the cry, Revenge. Why? He has himself reared the avenger, it is his own deed coming back to him in that ominous shout.

At this point we must mark the side on which character of Antonio shows its limitation; inconsistency cuts it in twain, for, though generally merciful, he was unmerciful to the Jew, and thus wronged his own principle. The sight of the pitiless man, made him pitiless in requital; he has berated, kicked, spit on Shylock in public; he has educated the latter to vengeance. "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, af-

fections, passions? If you prick us do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villiany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." Thus Shylock's deed is engendered of Antonio's deed, which is now coming back to the latter armed with all the might of Venetian justice.

If this passage shows Antonio in his limit, it shows equally well Shylock in his limit. The latter has drawn from the severe discipline of life not charity, but revenge. His sarcastic plea is Christian example, but just therein he is not Christian. His trials have begotten no love, but have nursed to colossal growth the Judaistic germ — an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. His hate now passes into guilt; he intends to destroy Antonio, if he can keep himself safe in the process.

Shylock's Judaism is strongly emphasized; and Judaism, in its narrow, sectarian manifestation, knows no Mercy — at least, Mercy in its universal sense. God has his own peculiar people; the world is for them, and the fullness thereof. Furthermore, the manifestation of God's favor is prosperity; of his wrath, adversity. Hence Shylock well states his end in life to be — Thrift,

The acquisition of gain is the highest object of existence; every other end is subordinate. Put a man into the world with this notion: "I am the favorite of the Almighty; the rest of mankind is only so much material to make money out of, which I can use as I please," and you have Shylock. It is curious to observe how the Poet paints him as penetrated with the morality of the Old Testament. He tells the story of Jacob's deceiving Laban, as scriptural proof that his end was justifiable: —

> "This was the way to thrive, and he (Jacob) was blest;
> And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not."

Note that only one exception is made — no stealing; everything else is allowable. The reason is manifest. Theft would annihilate property, and, with the destruction of it, his end also must perish, for that end itself is property. Hence his motto is: Thrift, but no Theft.

But now we are to consider the second element in the character of Shylock — an element which springs, not from his religion, but from his circumstances. Shylock represents the ancient Hebrew, with his essential peculiarities, cast into the modern world and subjected to abuse and injustice on account of his faith. He is, therefore, the product of two influences — first, the original Jewish character; second, that character in a strange land, persecuted and outlawed by society.

On every side he meets with scorn and outrage; hence the bitterness which overflows his whole existence, and poisons, not merely his social relations, but his own domestic hearth. Thrust into a Christian world, he must hate it on account of its attitude toward him, since it represents for him ridicule and oppression. Here the modern reader is touched with a sympathetic feeling for Shylock, and is not averse to hating along with him. In our own time and country these social and legal barriers of mediæval Europe do not exist, and no one thinks of distinguishing, in any public relation, the Jews from the common body of citizens. It is a cruel use of the Poet's great creation to call the Jews of the present day Shylocks, for to them certainly belongs a full share of the culture, public spirit, and liberality of the modern world.

But there is another contrast between Antonio and Shylock. The scene of this drama is laid in the greatest commercial city of that age, and it represents the business world. Hence it portrays man in his commercial relations to his fellow-man, and these transactions furnish the basis of a business morality. We hear the buzz of the exchange; we observe the leading question of a mercantile community — "what's the news on the Rialto?" We note with astonishment this center of information and commercial enterprise, for the ventures and the credit of Antonio are all well known to Shylock through this medium. This is, no

doubt, one of the great elements of the popularity of the play, for the chief portion of mankind must always be employed in the production and exchange of the fruits of the earth. Thus it appeals directly to business men, and is a picture of the business world. Furthermore, this is a world of free activity, for each one chooses what branch of business best suits his inclination and character. The calling thus becomes, to a certain degree, an index of the moral disposition of the man. It is well known that some kinds of business, though acknowledged by law and recognized by the community as necessary, are, nevertheless, held in disrepute by the great majority of mankind.

What callings, then, have these two men respectively chosen? Antonio is a merchant; he exchanges the productions of the world; he knits the nations together by mutual traffic — of course, for a consideration. But there is nothing narrow or mean in his nature; his end, as before stated, is not money, and this frees him from any trace of avarice or illiberality. In fact, his melancholy seems to arise in part from a dissatisfaction with his calling; it cannot satisfy the highest wants of man. Shylock, on the contrary, is a usurer; he takes advantage of the sudden wants of people to extort their earnings. Hence this class of men were regarded as the enemies of society, ready to draw profit out of any misfortune to the individual or

the State. It is not surprising, then, that this business fell into the hands of the Jews, who were persecuted by society, and, hence, hostile, or at least indifferent, to it. We shall not now dwell upon that equally unreasonable prejudice against all interest on money, which seems to be shared also by Shakespeare. The use of money ought to be worth something as well as the use of anything else. Our age has recognized this fact for the most part, though there still remain upon our statute books some traces of the old spirit, as, for example, the limitation of the rate of interest. The consequence, however, is that, in our time, the banker has taken the place of the usurer, and money has its price like any other commodity. The bank is now the handmaid of all commercial activity, and supports, instead of sapping, the enterprise of the country. But it is no wonder that formerly the merchant hated the usurer, for the merchant-prince who carries on a world-commerce is exposed to many unforeseen contingencies — the storm, the rock, the pirate — and sometimes *must* borrow. Hence Antonio's hatred of the Jew lies also in their callings.

2. Such is the first thread of the first movement, portraying the mercantile, but, above all, the spiritual, conflict between Antonio and Shylock. Let us now take up the second thread — the Love-conflict — in which Portia is the main figure, supported, however, by Nerissa and Jes-

sica. Portia is the third great character of the play, and in importance stands quite on a par with Antonio and Shylock. Her function is mediatorial; in fact, she may be called the grand mediatrix of the entire drama. In her we see the instrumentality by which the main results are brought about. Through her courtship with Bassanio, Antonio comes into the power of the Jew by means of the loan. At her house all the personages of the play assemble, and the wooing is done. Moreover she accomplishes the rescue of Antonio, which is the main mediation of the poem. The great principle of which she is the bearer may be termed the Right of Subjectivity. She asserts the validity of the Internal and Spiritual against the crushing might of externality; but she does not deny the Right of the Objective in its true limitation. Only when this Objective becomes destructive of its end, and self-contradictory, as in the case when the law was about to murder Antonio, does she place a limit to it, and invoke a higher principle. Her struggle is with legality and prescription asserting themselves in spheres where they do not belong; but, in relations where this contradiction no longer appears, she is the most ethical of women. In the Family her subordination is complete — indeed, devout. We shall see that all her acts have one end and one impelling motive — devotion to her husband, an absolute unity

with his feelings and interests; in other words subordination to the Family. She vindicates the Right of Subjectivity for herself in order that she may obtain the one whom she really loves — without which principle, it need hardly be said, the true existence of the Family is impossible. So peculiar is this character, so difficult is it to ascertain its unity, and so important is its place in the drama, that we shall be justified in looking somewhat minutely at all the circumstances in which it has been placed by the Poet.

First comes the long array of suitors, among whom were to be seen the nobility from every part of Europe — nay, even from Africa. The motive for this elaborate display, as we have before intimated, was to show the necessity of Bassanio's borrowing large sums of money to compete with these nobles, and also to exhibit Portia in all her dignity and splendor. But Portia has quite disregarded the outward glitter of wealth and rank, and has seemingly sought out a follower in the retinue of a lord, instead of the lord himself — "a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in the company of the Marquis of Montferrat." So, at the outset, we see that she cares naught for the External, but lays stress upon the Internal. The Poet has thus given us an inkling of her inclination that we may not be in the dark about her choice. Moreover, we already know of the inclination of

Bassanio from the very first scene of the play, and he, too, is aware of Portia's preference for himself. This point, then, let us carefully bear in mind — that the Poet has already let us into the secret, unknown to the outside world, that Portia and Bassanio love each other, and that each one knows of the other's love. The two people, therefore, belong together; they alone can form a rational union, since they possess the absolute prerequisite of the Family, namely, reciprocal love.

Under ordinary circumstances nothing would remain but that the happy pair should go to the nearest church, and, in common parlance, have the knot tied. But to this blissful consummation there is a great obstacle. Portia's father is dead, and has left a will which seems to bind her choice of a husband to a hopeless accident. Three caskets — made of gold, silver, and lead, respectively — are to be set before his daughter's suitors for selection, and that casket which contains her image carries with it her hand in marriage. Hence we find her lamenting, in almost her first words, that she cannot choose whom she would, nor refuse whom she disliked. But she recognizes the binding validity of the last request of her parent, and thus we have one of Shakespeare's favorite collisions, which may be stated as the Right of Choice against the Will of the Parent. Both sides have their validity, and it

is just this validity of both sides which makes it a genuine collision. None will deny the right of the parent over the child, and this right was less circumscribed in former times than at present. But, though the parent may no longer have any legal right, he has still the right of respect; and no child with a truly ethical feeling, such as Portia undoubtedly possessed, would withhold obedience.

Such is the one side. But the other side is what we have termed the Right of Choice, or, in general terms, the Right of Subjectivity. This demands that the daughter should have, absolutely, the right of selecting her partner for life. She has to bear the responsibility of her choice, for she must live with the one whom she selects. The husband and wife constitute that unity called the Family; it is a unity of emotion; each party finds true life in the other. This emotion, by which both are melted together into one common existence, is called love. So, if we have a true unity, or a true Family, love is the indispensable condition. Now, it is just this important element which the will of Portia's father flings to the winds by exposing the choice of her husband to mere accident. It does not demand reciprocal love, which is the only basis of rational marriage. Such is the problem which Portia has to solve, and such is the mental conflict which we find her undergoing. Let us, then, carefully observe how she manages the matter.

All the suitors have taken their departure except two (not including Bassanio), who are more determined or less punctilious than the rest. The causes of this withdrawal are not given, but may be easily imagined. We may suppose they were men of honor, and would refuse to acquire a wife by lot — to take the hand without the heart. Portia, too, may have shown, in an unmistakable manner, her dislikes, or, finally, they may have found the last condition too hard, viz.: That they must swear never to woo another woman. Whatever the reason may have been, they all vanish after they had served the Poet's purpose. But those who remain demand to have the caskets placed before them. The first one who goes through with the process of selection is the Prince of Morocco, who chooses by the outside appearance, and seems to rest his claim upon physical courage. He takes the golden casket, whose glitter typifies the brilliant exterior. Of course, such a choice is directly antagonistic to the character of Portia, and it is logically impossible that he can become her husband. The second one, the Prince of Arragon, chooses only to a certain extent by the outside, since he takes the silver casket—and he rests his claims upon merit. Now, merit is a most excellent thing, but we all know that it can never supply the place of love. It is no uncommon occurrence that the more deserving are passed by and the less worthy are

chosen — and who will say that it is not justifiable? Both Princes fail. Why? Because they lack the subjective element — love; at least, the love of Portia. For, as before stated, in order to form a true basis of the family relation, love must be reciprocal — each one must feel and find his or her own harmonious existence in the other. Rank, wealth, courage, and merit are much in their places, but they can never be substituted for affection. Thus we see that the rejection of these suitors was not a mere fortuitous circumstance, but a logical necessity of the play.

The caskets are really but a test of the motives of the suitors, who must choose as they do; they cannot help themselves, for they are held in the grip of their own natures. Note the difference of the caskets, gold, silver, leaden; each has, too, a different inscription. If these caskets were all alike, then the choice would be a pure accident. But now they entice the chooser, and make him reveal his inner disposition by his selection. The Prince of Morocco must follow the glitter; the Prince of Arragon must follow his own good opinion of himself. Given their characters, they must choose as they do, and choose wrongly, and reveal themselves in their choice. Thus accident is made the means for carrying out the free will of Portia; it is simply the mask of Love rejecting the wrong and accepting the right suitor. The conflict with the will of the parent, which at first

weighed so hard upon her, is reduced to a mere appearance, as Nerissa saw from the start: "the lottery will never be chosen by any rightly, but one whom you shall rightly love."

Perhaps, after all, the father was wise in making Accident play a part in the destiny of his daughter. Perhaps he did not mean to destroy her choice by his will, but to make her select aright, even to help her drive off improper suitors by an artifice. Perhaps he would compel her to master the formal side of life, when it assailed her internal right as a woman. In such a case Portia is not untrue to her father's will; in fact she is true to it just by breaking it. But these suggestions carry us outside of the play.

With the genuine humor of a woman, she yields obedience to authority, but at the same time she is going to have her own way. Portia has the humor of her sex, conscious and unconscious; in the account of her suitors she breaks out into a rollicking mockery with a shade of sarcasm. Many of the Poet's mediatorial women are humorists; they seem to get rid of the caprices and counterstrokes of life by blowing them off like bubbles, and letting them explode with a laugh. Portia has humor; she cannot choose and yet she has chosen; with her humor is a touch of world-weariness: "By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world." Yet even in the trial scene, so serious, there is the banter

about the rings. Humor is the relief from the conflict in the midst of it, while anxiety still presses. Thus melancholy is a shadow playing over the face of humor.

II.

We have now witnessed the two grand conflicts of the play in full operation. The next thing is, they are to be mediated. But by whom? Again this duty falls to the lot of a woman. Already in the love of Portia, the principle has been introduced, which will transform this entire world of conflict. First, she harmonizes her own struggle, which lies in the domestic realm. Then she carries her reconciling deed up into the State, into the very administration of Justice, to which she, the woman, brings Mercy, after a sharp struggle, and imparts it to all. Love is the germ, the first impelling force; love drives her to overcome the legal obstacle to itself; then it drives her to do for others what she has done for herself. Love is thus the curer, as well as the conqueror, verily the mediator; the love of Portia is the primal fountain whence flow the healing waters in which all are saved. Nay, she rises out of the Family, out of the State even, and reaches up to the heights of the World's History; she mediates essentially the conflict between Judaism and Christianity, and does over

again the greatest deed of Time. This deed Shakespeare assigns to a woman, not to a man; it would seem as if he might worship the Mother as well as the Christ. But it is wonderful; that little seed of Portia's love, sprouting amid so much confusion and conflict, will draw all to itself, and make out of chaos a cosmos. This is the work of the second movement of the play, which shows the mediation.

1. The first thread again takes up the conflict between Shylock and Antonio, and shows its solution. Shylock, being a Jew, can use the Gentiles for his own end; that end being Thrift, he uses them for making money. This is allowed by the law of Moses, which permits the Hebrews to take usury from the stranger, but not from the brother. But Antonio stands in his way. He has the right to employ any means of getting rid of the hateful merchant which does not endanger his own safety; for, if he should lose his life in the attempt, that would not be thrifty. The means most consistent with his own safety is the formal side of the Law — he is going to murder Antonio legally. Now, Law expresses the Right of the Person in reference to Property; its main *dictum*, even at the present time, is, "Property is sacred;" and the Jurisprudence of Venice was still more rigid in this respect than that of the present day. Hence the Right of Property comes into conflict with the

existence of the Individual. This is illustrated by the well-known example of a starving man stealing a loaf of bread. Is he justified in doing so, or not? We see the contradiction — the right to a loaf of bread on the one hand, against a human life on the other. All of us would say, in such a case, Property is the lower, and must be subordinated when it conflicts with humanity. Mercy overrides Justice. But the Jew must remain deaf to such considerations, for his highest end is Property. How, then, can he acknowledge a higher?

But Shylock's ground of right is still more devoid of a content than the case just mentioned, for he can get back his Property trebled. No; his bond calls for a pound of flesh — that, and nothing else, will satisfy him. Thus the collision is narrowed down to a mere empty form of Law against the existence of an individual. Law is pushed in this way to the extreme limit of self-contradiction, for Law, which was made to protect and preserve mankind, has now become the direct instrument of their destruction. Is not that self-contradictory? But it is the Law, and the Law must have its course, says Portia; only Mercy can soften its severity and annul its wrong. Hence her appeal for Mercy which we have already quoted. But the Jew cannot relent; the character would be utterly illogical and untrue if he did. The letter of the Law, then, is to be

followed with the utmost rigidity; this is the Jew's own basis. "But hold!" says Portia, "the bond mentions no blood." If you want the letter, you can have it to your heart's content. Portia abandons her first defense — that of Mercy — and takes the weapons of the Jew and turns them against him. This contradiction rests upon the fact that a law, a bond, a contract — yea, language itself — cannot describe the Particular, for they are in their nature general. We all know how cumbersome legal formulas are; with what wearisome detail they try to describe a title, a piece of land, or a testamentary act. It results from this circumstance. Hence, if an absolute adherence to the letter is insisted upon, neither Shylock's nor any other bond is possible.

Many lawyers have made objection to this point taken by Portia; they say that no court in Christendom would have decided that a pound of flesh did not include the blood, though the bond may not have expressly said so. This may be the case, but it does not affect the truth of Shakespeare's representation. His design was to show how formal Law contradicts itself, and to exhibit the Jew beaten at his own game. From this moment Shylock subsides; he sees the point, and is completely overwhelmed. The might of the Form of Law was never more powerfully presented. The judge, the people, and justice itself, are all on the side of one inno-

cent man, yet they are unable to rescue him from the clutches of an odious wretch who has the form alone on his side. Still, the Poet must find for us some reconciliation with the Law; it would be most ridiculously inadequate if it did not furnish some means for reaching the Jew. This it does, inasmuch as it is made to seize the crime of Shylock just in its truly vulnerable point — criminal intention. This is Portia's next point against him. He has willed the death of a citizen, of which the punishment is confiscation and death. We have seen this motive lying behind all his actions, notwithstanding his vociferation for Right and Justice.

Still, we must not suppose that he was a common villain — an Iago, or Richard, or Edmund. The subjective side was little emphasized by the Jewish faith. If men conformed to Law and Religion, it mattered not so much about motives. Under the old dispensation, the man who committed the most justifiable homicide had to flee the country, and the person who ate pork had committed a deed of guilt. Hence, when Shylock is arraigned for his subjective intention, we may fairly assume that this principle lies beyond his consciousness; it is the product of the modern world and Christianity. Still, Shylock is saved, because he is ready to yield to formal Law when that turns against him; hence the Law cannot well destroy him. This characteristic is the

direct antithesis of the modern spirit, whose tendency is rather to break down formal Law — to sacrifice it to the Individual. Shylock, however, is punished with a truly poetic justice. Avarice loses its money; religious and national bigotry sees the Jewish house of Shylock go down forever, by the marriage of the daughter with a Christian. Moreover, the court and Portia could not reasonably condemn the Jew after they had maintained the cause of Mercy with such persistency and power. It would be a flagrant inconsistency to demand that for Antonio which they the next moment refuse to Shylock.

It is not the design of Shakespeare to make the Law contemptible, but to exhibit its limitation. Even the old Romans recognized this limitation — although theirs was essentially the law-giving consciousness — in the well-known maxim: *Summum jus, summa injuria.* But it has been left to modern Jurisprudence to recognize and embody its own finitude within itself — in other words, to establish a system of Mercy. The pardoning power is lodged in the Executive by *Law;* thus the highest officer of the State, out of his own heart, out of his own infinite subjectivity, reverses the legal decision, and, hence, is by Law above Law. The Judge has to administer the formal Law, even in its injustice, and, therefore, he often, after giving a condemna-

tory sentence, turns around and signs a paper recommending executive clemency. But the Jurisprudence of Venice seems not to have yet recognized this distinction. It was a commercial state; its prosperity depended greatly upon the security of Property, hence the inflexibility of its Law. For the Right of Property was deemed of almost paramount importance; hence its Law cannot save Antonio, though it can condemn Shylock.

But what if the Jew would still insist upon taking his pound of flesh? Then he must have it, and the play becomes a tragedy. Antonio loses his life by the letter of the Law, and Shylock is executed for murder. But the play can not admit of this solution; for thus the character of the Jew would be wholly untrue, as we have before stated. Nor can the Poet allow Antonio to perish for a mere mistake. This would be totally adverse to his moral code. Hence the difficulty demands mediation, and the conclusion must be happy. The piece is, therefore, neither pure tragedy nor pure comedy, but a middle species of play, which may be called, for want of a better word, a mediated drama or tragi-comedy.

But the question will continue to come up: Is the Jew truly mediated? People will differ about the matter, but the Poet clearly answers, Yes. Let us notice the course of the trial in the Fourth

Act, that scene of the world's judgment, which reveals, in brief compass, the whole dealing of Christendom with the Jews. There are three stages. 1st. The preaching of Mercy to the Jew by the Duke and all, especially by the evangelist Portia. But the stiff-necked Israelite refuses it, scorns it, and triumphs in his principle. 2nd. That principle is turned against him in its inadequacy, he is the victim of his own justice. The penalty has come; not triumph now, but death looks him in the eye. 3rd. Again the evangel of Mercy, interceding not now for the Christian, but for the Jew, is heard in the question of Portia: "What Mercy can you render him, Antonio?" From the lips of his victim Shylock is to hear the answer: Mercy, yes; but on one sole condition, that his property, his family, and himself be Christianized. The answer seems harsh, but, given the conflict, no other solution is possible. A world based upon Shylock's principle, cannot exist, it must be transformed into another kind of world. Is not that the decree of history? Shylock himself sees the point which is made against him, he yields, and accepts the conditions in full.

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?
Shylock. I am content.

Perhaps this is a surrender to external force, with mental reservation; but we must think that

Shylock is smitten internally, as we have seen him breaking under the blows of Portia's argument. We do not say he repents, but he gives up his stand-point, otherwise the Poet would not let him off in the present way. Thus we must read the result: Shylock too is mediated — and mediated by Portia. He has a tragic element in him; as a Jew he perishes in his bitter conflict with Christendom. But in property, family, nay, in his new mediated self, he lives on, as far as we can see, to the natural end. He is, therefore, comic essentially; from the beginning the Poet gave him a biting speech, an odd demeanor; pathetic at times, he is always grotesque — note the scene between him and Tubal, in which two demons seem to be-devil each other in a mutual play of diabolic humor. But in a still deeper sense he is comic; he is mediated, saved, if not reconciled.

Shylock ranks as one of the most perfect characterizations in Shakespeare. How complete in every respect! How vividly does he rise up before us! Not merely his physical appearance, but his entire spiritual nature, stand forth in the plainest lineaments. In fact, we feel as if we know him better than we could possibly have done in real life. The Poet has laid open the most hidden recesses of character, has portrayed him in the most diverse relations, with a truth and fullness unapproached and unapproachable.

We ask ourselves — whence this completeness, this richness, this concreteness, of characterization? If we wish to see the infinite difference upon the same subjects, compare Shylock with the best efforts of other dramatists. Take *L'Avare*, by Molière. Placed by the side of Shylock, how meager and unsatisfactory? Can we get at the ground of this extraordinary superiority? First, we should say that Shylock is something more than mere avarice; he has a deeper motive in his nature, and his greed for gain is only one of its manifestations. It is true that his end in life is Thrift, as before stated, but that end is the offspring of his moral and spiritual being — of his religion. Everything goes back to this center. Shylock is a Jew — one of the "peculiar people." In all his actions this deepest principle of his faith and his consciousness wells out; given the motive, he marches logically to its consequences. Thus we have arrived at an absolute spiritual unity in the man. The second reason for the transcendent excellence of this characterization is the breadth which it exhibits. The activities of Shylock embrace quite the totality of Life. We see him in his family, in business, in civil relations, in social relations, in morality, in religion. We behold him brought into contact with every essential form of society; he acts in them, and brings his principle to the test through them. Nor is he plunged into them

from the outside, but is brought into living relation with them. Hence the concreteness, the perfection, the complete individualization, of character. But it is different with *L'Avare*. How limited is the range of the piece in this respect! Harpagon almost descends to the common miser — cut off from the world, in obscurity, dirt, and rags — holding fast to his money-bags. His niggardliness in his household, his tyranny in his family, and an example his extortionate usury, express quite all that we see of him. This is not Shylock — who is exhibited in many more, and also far more important, relations — who sees the world and grapples with it in all its essential forms; this is what gives content and concreteness to his character. Hence the Harpagon of Molière is empty — almost like an abstract personification of avarice; in fact, it is a meager caricature, compared with the Shylock of Shakespeare. But it gives occasion to many laughable incidents and situations; this was what Molière wanted; he sought for predicaments more than characters.

2. The second thread is Portia's, whose conflict has been already unfolded, and must now be shown in its mediation. Her work is double — she has first to solve her own difficulty, then Antonio's. After the failure of the two princes, Bassanio appears, in order to make trial of the caskets. He has both the requisite elements — loves and is loved; for the Poet has carefully

told us all this beforehand. We have no doubt of his success from the start. It is curious to trace the ethereal, almost imperceptible, influences which the Poet brings to bear upon Bassanio to determine his choice. First, his state of mind, all aglow with affection — no wonder that he disregards the exterior of things, for love is blind. Then Portia, in the same condition, and giving expression to it in words, to which we may add, in imagination, her looks. Finally, the music, and the vague hints of the song, until the feeling of internality is intensified to such a degree as to be irresistible. The very air seems to whisper in the ear of Bassanio, "take the leaden casket," since it is the negation of all outside show and glitter. In it he finds the picture of Portia — a most fitting symbol of the internal nature of the characters of both Bassanio and Portia, as well as of their relation to one another — the image of the loved one imprinted on the heart. The same principle which causes the rejection of the two Princes must bring about the triumph of Bassanio.

The grounds of a rational marriage are now complete. Portia and Bassanio have all the elements of a true union. Such is, undoubtedly, the logic of the situation. Thus the choice of caskets — which seemed to represent a horrible Chance about to crush out the rights of human nature — is spiritualized into the highest forms

of freedom. Portia wins, and, moreover, wins through the very instruments which threatened her happiness; she converts them to weapons for her own rescue. The choice exhibits the ends and motives of the chooser, and, in so far as these are finite and fall short of the Rational, failure results. In this sphere, namely, the unity which forms the basis of the marriage relation, the Rational is the right of Subjectivity.

But does Portia really give any hint to Bassanio which of the caskets to choose? It will be recollected that it was forbidden her in her father's will to tell this secret. A suspicious circumstance is the introduction of a song during the choice of Bassanio, which the previous choosers do not have the benefit of. Hence one is inclined to scrutinize closely the meaning of this song. It is somewhat enigmatic, yet its general purport may be stated to be: "Do not choose by the eye — by the glittering outside — for it is the source of all delusion." Hence Portia, after observing with the greatest care all the formalities of her father's will, breaks it just at the point of its conflict with her subjective right. This is done so delicately by her that it is scarcely perceived; still, it is none the less real. Thus she stands here as the grand bearer of the Right of Subjectivity, in its special form of Love versus Obedience to the will of the parent.

We have already, several times, called atten-

tention to the fact that Shakespeare has been very careful to show the mutual affection of both parties. These were the two that belonged together, and were bound to come together in spite of all obstacles. The two princes exhibit various phases of conflict with this principle of love, which was finally to triumph. Otherwise, the poem would be irrational, which, in Art, is the Ugly. Here we may note a distinction between Shakespeare and an inferior poet. The latter, instead of hedging Chance on all sides, and making it the lowest possible factor, would have given it full scope; for he seeks dramatic effects by surprise. Shakespeare, on the contrary, always prepares — never surprises. He elaborates the motives and ends, and marches to their logical conclusion. We feel that so it is, and cannot be otherwise; the process has all the rigid necessity of Reason. But the novelist or playwright seeks to produce a "sensation" through unexpected turns and incidents. The true artist, however, aims to have every action, and especially every crisis, properly *motived* — to use a German expression — and to banish accident altogether.

So ends the first part of Portia's career — she has solved the problem of marriage. Now a wholly new field awaits her. Up to this point (towards the end of the Third Act) the drama has produced three happy pairs of lovers — Portia

and Bassanio, Nerissa and Gratiano, Jessica and Lorenzo — who are all brought together in the pleasant halls of Belmont, Portia's country seat. But those very means which caused this blissful union have, in another direction, called forth a terrific collision. Suddenly, upon this tender scene, there lights the demon of ill news; word comes to Bassanio that his dearest friend, Antonio, to whom he owes all his present happiness, is in imminent danger of being sacrificed by the Jew. It falls like a thunderbolt in their midst, and scatters the company in every direction. Leaving Lorenzo and Jessica behind, they all quit Belmont at once, animated with one purpose — to rescue Antonio. Bassanio goes direct to his friend; Portia hits upon an indirect mode of procedure — she goes to Venice disguised as a lawyer. The main point to be noticed is that Portia succeeds — Bassanio does not. This is specially emphasized by the Poet. Bassanio, with all his money — or, rather, her money — fails, while Portia is the chosen mediatrix. With what skill she fulfilled her mission has been shown in the previous thread. It will be recollected that the collision which she is now called upon to mediate is there stated to be between Formal Law and what may be termed the Right of Mercy. Now, it is essentially the same struggle through which Portia has just passed; she has been able to master the difficulty and assert her principle.

Having thus gone through the fire herself, and knowing the frequent injustice of formal authority, she now sallies forth in defense of injured innocence. It is true that her father's will was enforced by prescription rather than by law; but it is the same principle, fundamentally, and in both cases Portia steps forth as the champion of the Right of Subjectivity. It is confessed that Antonio is wholly guiltless of any crime. He has not even willed, much less committed, any wrong deserving of death; yet he is about to be sacrificed on the altar of legality. She comes, therefore, to cut the toils of the law when they have entangled an impulsive, though innocent victim. It will thus be seen that she has been educated to meet just this crisis by her own experience.

But, however well fitted for the task she may be, there must be some motive to impel her forth. It has already been stated that, in the external course of the drama, Portia was the primal cause, or rather occasion, of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew. Bassanio needs money to carry on his courtship; he applies to his friend Antonio, who resorts to the Jew, and thus becomes his victim. Hence it is not at all out of place that she should become the instrument to make good the evil which she had unwittingly done. But, when it is added that this same man was the dearest friend of her husband, and the

chief means of her obtaining the one whom she loved, the motive for her must be all-powerful. Portia is a truly ethical character — she is one with her husband in feeling and interest. Her whole struggle hitherto has been in order that she might make a rational marriage, by uniting with the man of her heart. Anything, therefore, which affects him profoundly must affect her in an equal degree, as she is an organic member of that unity called Family. Now, Bassanio is so deeply attached to Antonio that he would even sacrifice his hard-won wife to effect the rescue of his friend. It is this sympathy — this oneness of feeling with her husband, which impels her to undertake the difficult enterprise. The pang which thrills his heart must pierce hers; the impulse which drives him forth cannot leave her behind. That woman expressed unconsciously the deepest principle of her nature, who said to her sick husband: "My dear, I have a pain in your breast."

But why should the mediatorial character be sustained by a woman? In this respect also the Poet is true to human nature. For it is just the subjective side of mind which is prominent in woman, and distinguishes her from man — who lays much more stress upon the validity of the objective world. So strong is this tendency in him that he is apt to disregard the other element. Hence we see, in the trial scene, that the judge

and citizens are all on the side of Antonio, yet they quail before that objective reality called Law. By no means let it be understood that these remarks are directed against Law; on the contrary, it is the greatest conservative power of humanity. But it has its limitations, and these we are insisting upon. Nor will it be denied that woman is the fittest person to plead for Mercy, since it tallies so thoroughly with her subjective, emotional nature. So appropriate is all this, that we feel that Portia never unsexes herself, nor even manifests any of the unlovely traits of strong-mindedness, though her adventures may well strike terror into any imitators.

Now, what is the secret of this characterization? Shakespeare has made Portia assume the most hazardous disguises, and perform the boldest acts — from which any woman might well shrink; and yet we feel that she is always womanly — nay, the most womanly of women. The great majority of Shakespeare's prominent female characters have one trait, however varied they may otherwise be — subordination to the Family. It is a devotion to husband, parent, child, lover; they live but for one object — to be absorbed into the existence of another. By themselves they feel that they are nothing; only in the unity of feeling, interest, and existence with another do they have any happiness in life. The complete absorption of the individual through

emotion, not consciously, but instinctively, is the grand characteristic which Shakespeare gives to his women — that is, to those whom he wishes to portray as good, noble and dutiful. On the contrary, his bad women are, for the most part, marked by quite the opposite of this quality. Such are the limits in which Shakespeare's female characters move. Now, that just this trait forms the charm of woman few men will deny. Though wit, fancy, learning, may call forth admiration, there must be something quite different to subdue. It is not servitude, but the willing subordination to the higher end — self-sacrifice in its most exalted form. We believe that it is this consideration which makes us ever respect Portia; her motive is pure devotion to her husband, complete oneness with his interests and friendships, added, no doubt, to gratitude toward that man — Antonio — who has been chiefly instrumental in making her the happiest of mortals. For Antonio is a stranger to her so far as we know; why should she assume the disguise, and run the risk of an ignominious exposure and tarnished reputation? No; she has that complete harmony and unity with her husband, that his joys are her joys, his sorrows her sorrows; and she has the same interest in her husband's friend that the husband himself has. Thus she is a truly ethical character — ethical in the sense that she instinctively subordinates herself to the highest end of woman.

Such is the motive which impels Portia forth to the rescue of Antonio. Just here occurs the seeming contradiction in her character. Hitherto she has asserted boldly and strongly her individual rights; she has trampled upon custom, and even Law, when they have stood in the way of her purposes. But the moment she is united with Bassanio, all is changed. She yields up her whole being to another, who is, of course, equally devoted to her; this daring and resolute will is now at peace, and submissive; and her expression of subordination is as absolute as language can make it: —

— "Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself . . .
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted; but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen of myself, and even now — but now
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord."

Now, what is the solution of these contradictory traits? Portia insists upon the subjective principle only in order that her union with her husband may be more complete. She has struggled for the Right of Choice. To what end?

Since the oneness of the marriage-tie is based upon emotion, she insists that emotion in this sphere must have absolute validity. Every hindrance must be set aside; the more intense and unobstructed the affection, the more perfect the bond of unity. Thus she has asserted her individuality, with the single purpose that her subordination might, in the end, be more complete, and that her marriage might be truer and more rational.

A great many persons are inclined to rebel at this sudden swallowing up of individuality, and, at the first glance, it does seem a hard destiny. Yet it will require but little examination of the actual world to discover that all true living is coupled with just such abnegation of self — indeed, that life would otherwise be impossible. Goethe, in his later writings, has often laid much stress upon the Renunciation of the Individual; and the great poets, philosophers, and moralists, in their own different ways, have repeated the same lesson. To live for a universal end is not merely desirable, but necessary, and forms the basis of moral action. All organization, society, state, demand the subordination of particular ends, motives, and desires; otherwise, institutions of every kind would be quite impossible. The truth is the individual would perish through his own self-contradiction were he not subsumed. So the family organism requires the same renun-

ciation from man and woman; both must sacrifice their self-will, and submit themselves to the higher end. In fact, love is the emotional, and, hence, unconscious and unwilled, cancellation of the individual; it means that a person finds his whole happiness — indeed, even his existence — not in himself, but in another. It is from these considerations that we perceive Portia's character to be a harmonious Whole, springing from one central thought, and true in the profoundest sense to human nature. Portia thus stands as the type of the rational woman — rational in what she resists and in what she accepts, rational in rebellion and in submission. She is a strong character, yet not strong-minded, in the special sense of this term; she withers not, like a delicate flower, at the first rude blast, but maintains her individual right, till to yield becomes duty.

The remaining characters need not be long dwelt upon. Bassanio is made worthy of Portia by his devotion to his friend, and she perceives him to be a true man. This is shown in his selection of the leaden casket; he chooses not by appearance, he is aware that "outward shows be least themselves;" inner worth is his principle. He knows, too, that love means sacrifice, the inscription on his casket reads: "Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath." Indeed he carries his devotion to the last point of self-denial. He is

even ready to sacrifice his new bride on the altar of friendship, through which alone he has gained her. Bassanio is the means by which Antonio has come into difficulty. Bassanio's prosperity has been Antonio's adversity, but he is willing to forego it all for the sake of the friend to whom his good luck is owing. Thus his devotion is complete; every shade of selfishness is stripped off, and we behold the worthy husband of Portia. Gratiano and Nerissa serve chiefly as mirrors for the leading characters — to reflect motives, thoughts, and sentiments. They have little distinct individuality, yet are very necessary to show other persons. Nerissa does little but exhibit her mistress, and the same function is performed for Antonio by Solanio and Solarino.

One of the under-currents of the play, which, however, soon mingles with the main stream, is the story of Jessica, the daughter of the Jew. Here again we have the assertion of the Right of Choice against the Will of the Parent — the same collision as Portia's. But it is in a wholly different soil and atmosphere, and, hence, the fruit is different. Portia respects all the formalities of her deceased father's testament; Jessica tramples without scruple upon all the commands and prejudices of a living father, and steals his money besides. Portia's father was said to have been wise and just. We know the character of Shylock, and what his daughter's education must

have been; hence the great difference in the moral character of the two children. Jessica is the re-action against her father; the daughter of the miser is a spendthrift, in one night squandering in Genoa fourscore ducats; the child of the strictest Jew changes faith and marries a Christian. In her Shylock is seen undoing his family, religion, race. Many bad things she does; still we shall have to forgive the naughty girl, under the promise that she will do better in the new situation. The same collision occurs in the clown, Gobbo, but in a form so low, so devoid of content, that it becomes ridiculous — in fact, a burlesque. It appears here as duty to a master who starves and abuses, against the right of running away. Gobbo succeeds, after a subtle piece of argumentation, in reconciling his conscience with his desire, and then takes to his heels. Thus in Portia, Jessica, and Gobbo, there is seen a graduation of the same collision.

III.

The Fourth Act terminates the leading collision of the play — that between Shylock and Antonio. The one has been punished, the other rescued. Why, then, is the Fifth Act added? It is because the minor complications, which are brought about by the leading collision and form a necessary element of it, are not yet solved. Portia

and Bassanio have been violently separated — like Gratiano and Nerissa — by the main struggle. When this is at an end, there is no longer cause for separation; but they must quickly rebound to their former union, which is their only rational existence. Hence the Return, which is the theme of the Fifth Act, is a logical movement of the whole drama. If there be mediation, it must be complete in every part.

Moreover, Bassanio and Gratiano are as yet ignorant of the share their wives have had in accomplishing the great mediatorial act. To be sure, we — the audience or the reader — know all about the matter, but it is certainly not our duty to supply the missing elements of a work of Art. If such were the case, the greatness of the poem would depend upon the greatness of the hearer or reader — that is, his ability to make it perfect. In short, a drama, or any work of Art must be complete in itself — an objective whole, not dependent upon anybody to supply its omissions — and the characters must be intelligible, not merely to us, but to one another.

Hence the Fifth Act may be called the Return. The characters pass out of the realm of difference and contradiction into the world of harmony. It opens with an idyllic strain, which at once ushers us into the nature of the place — we are now in the land of love. Lorenzo and Jessica, in responsive song, celebrate the heroes and hero-

ines of romantic devotion. Next the sweet strains of music arise — the language of emotion and harmony. So there is diffused over the whole scene the atmosphere of love and concord. Finally, the parties return separately from their struggle, into the land of harmony; the rescued Antonio is also there — the mark of triumph. The difficulty about the rings is only temporary; their hearts are right, and that is the main thing; for it would ill become Portia, after her crusade against the most weighty formalities of the world, to insist upon the formality of a ring. Even the ships return to smooth over the last trouble; and the concord is perfect when the story of the disguise is told. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare has here localized his themes. The abode of quiet is at a distance from the place of strife; so Belmont is the land of Harmony and Love, which they leave in the hour of struggle and to which they come back in the hour of peace. This may be a violation of that critical canon which demands Unity of Place, but it is a rule which Shakespeare very often follows, and which it would not be very hard to justify.

To aid the readers who may desire to grasp these results in the more difficult, yet more precise, forms of philosophical statement, the following summary is given: The collision is between Antonio and Shylock, and is mediated by Portia. Its logical basis is the contradiction be-

tween the Objective as realized in the institutions of Reason, and the Subjective as the individual side of man: The former undertakes to crush the latter, through which alone it had existence, for it is posited by the Subjective; hence it becomes contradictory of itself, and is negated. The Subjective, since it is not universal, is, in its turn, a new self-contradiction, and, hence, a negative of itself — which results in its subsuming itself under the Objective. So Portia asserts the right of subjectivity, only to end by subordinating herself to one of the forms of objective reality— the Family. But now from philosophy to the story.

It is manifest that the *Merchant of Venice* is made up of two legends which appear in the two threads of the play. Both the story of the Pound of Flesh and the Choice of the Caskets have been traced back to the far Orient, to Buddhistic sources, from which they are said to have passed through Mongolian and Arabian channels into the Occident. Other authors affirm that the opposite was the direction of the current, that these stories went from the West to the East. But it is quite as easy to believe that they are indigenous in both parts of the globe. The legend is the offspring of man's conflict in certain social conditions; it grows, like the tree, quite everywhere, and it is as universal as the family or society. For instance, the legend of the Pound of Flesh

can be found, in its essential fact, among Greek, Roman, Teutonic, Slavic peoples, as well as in the Orient. It shows a social condition which has reached its first strong regard for property, so that it secures a debt by the body. Then it shows the conflict with this law or custom, inasmuch life is weighed out in the pound of flesh. The legend thus hints the first revolt of Person against Property. Every society passes through such a condition, and its legend will sprout in the soul of man as naturally as the seed in the soil. The Twelve Tables of early Rome have handed down just such an ordinance with its necessary conflict, and the corresponding legend is not wanting in early Roman tradition.

The two stories are found in a mediæval collection of tales called *Gesta Romanorum*, though they are not united. In this book the bond is given by a soldier to a merchant; but the Jew appears in the novel called *Il Pecorone* by Giovanni Fiorentino, published at Milan 1558. (Reprinted with Italian text and English translation by Collier in his *Shakespeare's Library*.) Directly or indirectly the Poet must have used this novel; it gives him his story except the choice of the caskets; it has the conflict with the Jew on account of the bond, it has the mediation of the conflict by a woman in disguise, it has the return from Venice to Belmont. Other characters the novel suggests, but it has no Jessica,

whom Shakespeare probably took from Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* — a play which furnished a good many hints to our drama, and particularly gave the demonic outlines in the character of Shylock. But the Italian novel *Il Pecorone*, though it furnishes structure, incident and figures, has no true characterization; it has no Portia, but in her place a Circe, who charms the adventurer by the grossest sensual allurements into her abode, and is at last herself deceived; she preaches no doctrine of mercy, but fools the Jew, by the legal trick, and then lets him go; in fine, all the deeper motives are added by the Poet. The principle of the novel is hardly more than a low Italian cunning; it is difficult to find a trace of the lofty mediation which is the soul-inspiring principle of the play. Again we note the function of the Poet; given his materials, he transfigures them; the human feature he always retains, but makes it radiant with spirit; the dead body of the story undergoes the wondrous poetic transformation: —

> Of his bones are coral made,
> Those are pearls that were his eyes,
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

Was Shakespeare the first dramatist to unite the two legends of this play, as he was the first to unite the two legends of *Lear*? Probably

not. Stephen Gosson, in his *School for Abuse*, published in 1579, speaks of a play called the Jew which represented "the greediness of worldly choosers" as well as "the bloody minds of usurers." Some precursor, then, had brought together into one work the stories which the Poet has employed.

An historical counterpart of Shylock, as is supposed, has been discovered in Dr. Rodrigo Lopez, a Jew, or at least of Jewish extraction, who was Queen Elizabeth's physician, and who was executed for high treason in 1594. Some have thought this was about the time of the first production of the *Merchant of Venice*. In the parallel, there are certain surprising similarities; still in the main it does not hold. The Poet was doubtless influenced strongly by the events transpiring around him; but his poetic principle is averse to anything like historic allegory. At most the case of Lopez may have furnished an impulse, hardly a counterpart.

It is worthy of notice that the Jews of to-day differ in regard to Shylock as much as other people. Two opposite opinions are maintained by Jewish writers of distinction. The one is that Shakespeare represented in Shylock the martyr of his faith and race; the other is that the Poet catered to or shared in the hate and prejudice of his age against the Jews and the Jewish character, and in the portrait of Shylock dealt a blow to the

chosen people, from which they have not yet recovered. Jewish gentlemen may be heard maintaining with some warmth each side of the question. Now the curious fact is that both views, within proper bounds, are correct. As a Jew Shylock goes down in the play, he is a martyr, but hardly the triumphant martyr of his race and faith. On the contrary, the limits of the old race and faith in him are drawn with an unsparing hand, and are made to vanish in a new race and faith. This is done with such rigor toward the individual that the modern reader is shocked and feels forced to cry out against the personal intolerance. But if Shylock be an idea, and that too a world-historical idea, which is in conflict with another idea, then one must pass into the other, and in essence vanish, though the old form of it be retained. The Jews themselves, in the main, acknowledge something of this kind; they, too, share in the forward movement of the world, they develop, they change, even if they cling to the ancient writ and ritual, and certainly they show by their deeds, that they, as much as Christians by profession, are heirs of the evangel of Mercy. As to who preached it first, they probably have their own opinion. So much for Shylock as a shibboleth of race, creed, and party. We must affirm, then, that Shylock as an idea, must be mediated, and mediated in the manner of the Poet; otherwise he must be destroyed, and is

tragic — which would, however, pervert both the character and the play.

So too in regard to Portia the sentimental critic must brace up his nerves a little. She is bold of deed, and also bold of speech; she is a humorist, like most of Shakespeare's mediatorial women, and full of fantastic adventure. This freedom is hers; she has also another and much higher freedom which is the source of her mediation. She must break her father's will just at its point of collision, else she solves no problem. If she, in the affair of the caskets, simply resigns herself to outer accident, she has no merit; sheer luck helps her out, and there is no preparation in her experience for the great final act of rescuing Antonio, wherein she must again break the force of the formal law. Quite unconsciously this seems to be done in the choice of Bassanio, still it is done, and must be done. Critics simply praise her dutiful daughterly obedience to her father's command; yes, this we may grant, but it is not the central fact of her character. She must be the mediatrix, but a truly terrestrial, Shakespearian one.

Still, on this side she touches the elbows of the supreme female characters of the other Great Poets — Dante's Beatrice, Goethe's Margaret, who also represent, in their final highest manifestation, the realm of mercy, and are mediatorial. Both the latter, however, are translated to Heaven, and thence perform their mediation, while Portia

remains on earth to the last, a true child of the great secular Poet. But in all three poets we behold the same regard for the spiritual element in woman — a regard which rises to a certain kind of adoration, since she is chosen by them all to rescue the man fallen, or about to fall, in his conflict with the hostile agencies of the world.

THE IDEAL CLASS.

That class of comedies in which the mediation takes place wholly through the Real World has been already considered. There is a conflict in society portrayed, but it is healed through the ordinary instrumentalities which man employs for this purpose. Institutions are made to correct their own wrong. But now we are to treat of a class of comedies in which the mediation is relegated to a new realm — distant, wholly different in character, essentially ideal. The logic is that the Real World of institutions, since it is in conflict with itself, and productive of wrong to the individual, must be entirely abandoned, and a human abode be sought in which conflict cannot exist, and, hence, in which institutions are not found at all, or only in their simplest state. This may, in a general way, be called the Ideal World, as it is an abstraction from the real life of society.

It will be noticed that such a dramatic ideal is more profound and more consistent than that which lies at the basis of the previous class of comedies. When institutional life becomes

utterly self-contradictory, and it cannot mediate itself, it must be left behind, and a non-institutional life has to take its place. Moreover, the fact is deeply consonant with human experience; men do flee from society when its collisions become too strong for endurance, and betake themselves to a simpler social condition—sometimes even to the woods; but more frequently they remain in society, and construct, with the aid of the imagination, some purely ideal state, in which they may dwell free from all conflict. Indeed, pretty much everybody gets to building imaginary republics in times when the external political world has become utterly corrupt and hopeless.

Still, such an ideal realm is an irrational abstraction, a transitory figment of the brain. It offers, however, a glorious field for poetic creation and embellishment — that beautiful sphere of pure fiction in which a poet is at home. But it is essentially comic — comic in the highest degree — for through it the individual is led forward in the pursuit of an end wholly absurd and self-annulling. For, when he has realized his Ideal World, at that moment it is annihilated, since it must be real then, and no longer ideal. This is the essence of the comic character — his purpose is null in itself, and breaks to pieces in its very accomplishment.

Hence the Ideal World must vanish, and the true poet will not fail to portray both the man-

ner and cause of its disappearance. The distinction is worthy of notice; it is only the sentimental half-poet who remains wholly wrapped up in his idyllic scenery. Though there be a flight from society to a pastoral or rural life, there must be likewise a return to society, and the poet should be able to comprehend it, and to portray it in its true nature. Let him not flee to the country and stay there, in his poetry; the complete circuit of experience must also be reflected in the artistic product. Hence, there is a deep necessity for restoration to society, which alone is the rational abode of man, and the true work of Art will not fail to embody the same thought in a faithful picture of human spirit.

The return to civilized life, therefore, is certain to take place; the individual must again produce those very institutions which he has abandoned, or perish; society will spring up of itself even in this Ideal World. Hence the latter disintegrates within; it rapidly developes internal conflicts which destroy it — which compel it into some form of social organization. But the twofold result of its existence must not be forgotten — on the one hand, it has brought back the individual to institutional life, and healed the wounds of his spirit; on the other hand, it has harmonized the conflicts of society by removing the wrong which caused the flight, for this new society which has resulted from the Ideal World

is free from the original injustice towards the individual. Thus the mediation on both sides is complete, and is effected through this Ideal World.

It will be manifest that a dramatic form of this kind involves three essential movements. First is the Real World of conflict; man falls out with institutions which have become the means of oppression and wrong; usually both Family and State are involved in struggle; hence comes the flight to an opposite condition of existence. Secondly, this is the Ideal World, whose prime function is the mediation of the conflict; the guilty must be punished or brought to repent, the injured must be righted and restored, and, above everything else, society must free itself of wrong and contradiction. Then the Ideal World passes away, for the evil to which it owed its origin is cured, and there remains nothing but the return of all the conflicting elements to harmony and to society. This last is the third movement. But the Poet came to this complete form of organization in his dramas not all at once; he had to grow to it. We can see that the structure of his earlier plays is imperfect, unclear; still he always shows the germ of what he afterward reaches.

We naturally ask ourselves, What is the ground of this Ideal World? Why does not the Poet mediate his collisions in the same domain in

which they arise, as he does in his Real Comedies, which we have just considered? What is the need of this new realm? What is the necessity of its origin? We see that it has the same ethical foundation, it springs from the same domestic conflicts, that between parent and child, that between husband and wife, that before and after marriage.

If we look back at those Real Comedies, we find that they lie wholly in realm of the Family, and that the State does not interfere through its authority with the course of the action. In some of them no ruler is present, in others he is present, but in a subordinate position. For instance, in *Comedy of Errors*, the Duke represents simply one of the elements entangled in the delusion, he has no hand in determining the sweep of the play. In *Twelfth Night*, the Duke is only one of the colliding parties, and has no reigning influence.

In the Ideal Comedies, on the contrary, we shall see some phase of the same ethical conflict, but it is not permitted to solve itself on its own ground; the State will interfere, will give usually some command which causes a flight beyond the State to get rid of its authority. This is what calls up the Ideal World in which the person is free from social order and its law.

It is plain that this Ideal World may take many forms, has taken many forms in the history of

mankind. In Shakespeare there are three leading phases of it, which we may designate as the Monastic, Idyllic, and Fantastic.

The Monastic Life is that to which the individual flees in order to get rid of the struggles and obstacles of the world; it is usually a religious institution organized and existent alongside and inside of secular institutions, whose conflicts it seeks to mediate. It is born of a flight from Family and State to a cloistered life, of which, in Shakespeare, two forms are employed—the one for study, as in *Love's Labor's Lost*, the other for a religious purpose, as in *Measure for Measure*. This realm may be considered to make a transition to the following.

The Idyllic Life belongs to the country, to the woods; it is the primitive social order to which man goes back in seeking escape from the complex, feverish organism of civilized society, for from this it is far removed both in Space and Time. It has, however, a tinge of reality; it may be, it has been, though it belongs to a period which has vanished for the civilized community. There are four plays in which this Idyllic Life forms the mediating principle. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* it appears in the shape of the wood of Outlaws; in *Cymbeline* it rises up in the mountain of the Hunters; in *As You Like it* and *Winter's Tale* it is the land of the Shepherds.

The third phase of this Ideal World we have

called the fantastic, a purely imaginary domain in which the last faint shade of the Real World is swept away, and there appears a romantic realm of supernatural shapes, through which the mediation takes place. The individual now creates out of his own imagination a mystic land with its strange beings, among which he dwells and finds reconciliation. Here we place two dramas, *Midsummer Night's Dream* with its Fairy-world, and *Tempest* with its Spirit-world, one of which belongs to the Poet's early period, the other to his latest. Thus we behold this poetic wonder-land overarching his career from beginning to end.

CLASSIFICATION. — As we saw in the Real Comedies, so these Ideal Comedies differ much from one another in their mood and color, which may be sportive or serious, with all the intermediate hues. Some tend toward a tragic depth of earnestness, others toward the light gayety and capricious humor of simple Comedy. Here, too, then, we may classify these dramas into Tragi-Comedies and Pure Comedies. There are eight which can be arranged in two groups. Of these plays we shall make a short comparison as regards their mediating idea.

The first group is made up of the Pure Comedies into which an ideal world plays in some form. Of these we note four. In *Love's Labor's Lost* there is an attempt to produce an Academe, a realm of study, in opposition to the

Family. Here the ideal sphere is placed at the beginning of the play and is not mediatorial, hence is not employed in its true sense. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* there is a flight to the World of Outlaws, which accomplishes the mediation, though it is imperfect in many ways. The conflict is in the Family, both fugitives and outlaws are restored. In *As You Like It* the ideal realm is complete, and is shown in its full glory; it is in the form of a pastoral life, to which there is a flight from the Family and State, and in which all the social wounds are healed. This play is a great advance upon the two just mentioned. In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, though earlier in date than the preceding play, we ascend to a purely ideal realm — fairy-land — through which the reconciliation takes place. There is a conflict in the Family in which the ruler interferes with his stern law; the result is a flight to a land beyond law. Moreover, the play is made to reflect itself, though in a burlesque.

In these four dramas we observe a gradual rise through the monastic, idyllic and fantastic phases of life into harmony with the world-order. We also notice a grand development in thought and structure, doubtless corresponding to the inner development of the Poet. They are all in his lighter vein; inner caprice and outer accident rule the hour; folly, whim, weakness are

here, sometimes brushing the outskirts of guilt, then vanishing in their own absurdity.

Now, we come to the second group of the ideal class, in which we place four dramas, and name them Tragi-Comedies. Folly deepens to sin, caprice sinks to guilt; thus tragedy enters, unless there be a spiritual change in the character. This change is repentance, the undoing of the guilty deed, whereby the individual is saved. Hence the dark tragic tinge to these plays in spite of the happy outcome. Yet mediation is the grand, all-pervading fact of this group; indeed these four plays may be said to mediate Shakespeare's great tragedies, after which they come in the order of time and in the order of thought, as well as in the order of the Poet's development.

In *Measure for Measure* the man and the woman flee to their religious world, which is in the form of a monastic life, to get rid of the ills of society. But they have to return in a hurry that they may save the secular world. In *Winter's Tale* the flight is to the land of the Shepherds, which mediates the return of the fugitives, while the repentance of the royal wrong-doer eliminates the original cause of the flight and makes restoration not only possible, but necessary. In *Cymbeline* there is a great similarity to the preceding play in structure, style, color and characterization. But the ideal

realm is changed, doubtless with design, from a world of Shepherds to that of Hunters. Repentance is also prominent in this drama. In *Tempest* we rise to a purely ideal realm — the Spirit-world — through which the great breach in Family and State is healed. But a new element is added; the Poet includes himself in his imaginary world, making it and reflecting himself in the creation of his own poem; he not only produces his work, but shows himself producing it. This is, then, the complete synthesis of all his dramas in a drama — and here ends his book — "I'll break my staff," "I'll drown my book."

In these four dramas we again observe a gradual rise through the monastic, idyllic and fantastic phases of life into harmony with the world-order. This harmony has now become altogether the profoundest, as well as the all-controlling fact in Shakespeare.

LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

The realm to which the flight is to be made in the present drama, is that of study. It is placed at the very beginning of the action, and not in the middle; the ideal life is here not mediatorial, as it is in the Poet's riper plays of this class. On the contrary, in *Love's Labor's Lost*, there is shown a re-action against this ideal life when it takes an ascetic form for the purpose of mere study. The re-action is given in three leading phases: first, ethical Love, which leads to the Family, assails such a life, overcomes it, and inflicts upon its adherents a penalty; secondly, sensual Love, as the strong protest of Nature, violates the ascetic ordinance from the start; thirdly, Learning, which is the object of the life above mentioned, is shown in its one-sidedness and folly when it is an end unto itself; it simply makes pedantic fools, and thus dissolves in its own absurdity. Biron, who, to a certain extent, is the bearer of the protest against this ascetic world, asks the keen question: What is the end of study? This question is essentially that of the play, which also gives an answer.

Disease of Learning is shown in manifold forms by the various characters, who become comic, self-annulling in the very folly of their pursuit of wisdom. As Biron says: —

> So study evermore is overshot,
> While it doth study to have what it would,
> It doth forget to do the thing it should.

There is Don Armado, who is "a refined traveler of Spain," in whom learning has produced only bombast, who "hath a mint of phrases in his brain." Costard, the ignorant boor, has caught the affectation and uses words and logical forms which he does not understand. Then there is a special class of pedants drawn in broad caricature. The lovers, too, the more elevated characters, are strongly tainted with the prevailing epidemic; they indulge in affected speech, alliteration, conceits, sonnets in which the language of love wears the heaviest bonds. Yet they are men of study, and are eager in the pursuit of knowledge. The words of the Princess apply to them all: —

> None are so surely caught, when they are catched,
> As wit turned fool; folly in wisdom hatched,
> Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school,
> And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

Even in this speech we see affectation falling into affectation in censuring itself; the devil is still the devil in reproving sin.

Now this was the condition of the Poet when he wrote the play. He was still under the domination of conceit and affected antithesis, coupled with a certain degree of pedantry, though he was laughing at these follies. If he were outside of them and wholly beyond them, they would be indifferent to him. This gives the flavor of the play with its fantastic humor; the author is still in it, but rises above it with a laugh, which, nevertheless, involves him in his own ridicule. He is aware of this condition. Biron declares penitently: —

> These summer flies
> Have blown me full of maggot ostentation * * *
> Henceforth my wooing mind shall be expressed
> In russet yeas and honest kersey noes: —

but at once he cannot help violating his good resolution by using an affected word, whereat he confesses:

> Yet I have a trick
> Of the old rage; bear with me, I am sick,
> I'll leave it by degrees.

This whole play, one thinks, is the process of the Poet in freeing himself from the "rage," which is his own, and that of his time. Like these students he is the votary of love rather than of learning; so he will remain during life; he is not going to be a scholar, but a poet. He has here settled his own relation to erudition — a matter which has troubled so many critics. Latin,

French, History, Mythology, and other disciplines are touched upon in this drama; but especially we see how profoundly he has studied his own language and his own poetic art on their technical side. Listen to the school master criticising speech and verse; it is doubtless an echo from the Poet's own talk and study, though it be comic and exaggerated. In later works he will not often have much to say about his art — never so much as in this play.

In fact, the relation of the Poet to *Love's Labor's Lost* is very significant. It shows that he had wrought in many departments of learning, even in anatomy, that he is a man of study, yet has seen its vanity when pushed beyond its end. The play is clearly his declaration of war against mere erudition, though he is still involved in its meshes, he is liberating himself, but is not yet wholly free. The struggle has still a strong interest for him, because he is not yet fully master of himself in this direction; he revels with delight in pedantry while ridiculing it; we see the young Shakespeare with vivid reminiscences of his school days — beyond them, yet in them still. He undoubtedly was asking that question of Biron — What is the end of Learning? Those who are fond of dwelling upon Shakespeare's illiteracy, and of drawing conclusions from it, would do well to ponder this play, which shows both learning and its comedy.

It is one of his earliest works, contesting priority with *Comedy of Errors* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with which it has many connecting links in style, meter, and characterization. In the fact that love conflicts with and overcomes study, the play touches *Taming of the Shrew*. In the little play within the play, turned into burlesque by clownish actors and ridiculed by the spectators, it connects with *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In its perverted use of words for comic effect, and in its philological fun generally, it is related to *Merry Wives*, and several other comedies.

It seems to have been a popular reading-play of the time. Like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* it was "corrected and amended," probably by the author, and published by Cuthbert Burby (otherwise Burbage), brother of the famous actor, and a well-known book-dealer of London. This publication is dated 1598; the play gives several indications of two kinds of style; the Poet doubtless "corrected and amended" his early play, which goes back eight or ten years from the mentioned date. The plot is supposed to be the Poet's own, though many special incidents may have been derived.

Twelfth Night is probably the most perfect comedy written by Shakespeare — viewed from the stand-point of organization — while just the contrary must be asserted of *Love's Labor's Lost*. There is no scaffolding here which adequately

supports the entire work; there is no intrigue which gives a backbone to the whole action and makes it a complete unity. It lies before us, to a certain extent, divided into pieces which are not fully articulated. It is like the less perfect animals which may be separated into parts and each part will still remain an animal. It has disguises and concealments, but none which run through and hold together the entire plot. A story it has, undoubtedly, but a story to which precisely the same objections apply. Those of the Poet's readers who find as much delight in the structure of his dramas as in their other great qualities must now expect some disappointment.

So much may be said about its organization, which pertains to the proper employment of dramatic instrumentalities. Still, there is a central thought which controls the work, though often in a very remote and capricious manner. Other merits, too, of a high order must be acknowledged. Characters are drawn with definiteness, though frequently with some extravagance — in fact, the play is thoroughly a comedy of character, and is defective in the element of situation; hence its frame-work is so inadequate. Its coloring is that of unbounded, uncontrollable caprice, which scouts all propriety — even artistic propriety; it bubbles over with puns, conceits, whimsicalities, of every description and under all circumstances; it is a wilderness of jokes and

humors. The reader is not expected to be able keep his face straight for any length of time, and, if the scene momentarily wears a sober look, it is felt to be preparatory to an effervescence. The youthful author shows here his most wanton mood; it is as if he were trying to leap out of his skin from pure mirthfulness. Still, it is worth our trouble to see how far the thought shines through this somewhat tangled mass of dramatic luxuriance, even though we sometimes have to force what is dim into a little stronger light than either the strict language or the immediate connection of the passage may warrant.

It is manifest that the drama mainly springs from a collision of love. But the form of this collision is novel; a new obstacle is introduced — study undertakes to suppress, and, hence, conflicts with, love. The latter is supposed to be an ancient enemy of learning; it distracts the attention, stirs up the passions, muddles the brain. Thus the two hostile powers grapple; the course of the play will show that love is not only triumphant against the pursuit of erudition and philosophy, but also punishes its contemners by a torture peculiar to itself, namely, loss of immediate fruition. Such is unquestionably the leading thread of the drama, supported by the group of elevated characters. But another element must

not be omitted; the reverse side of mere erudition is shown when it is not tempered by love, or some other corrective — it makes men comic; they become learned fools. So, from this point of view, study may be said to be triumphant in its one-sided pursuit — triumphant in producing pedants. Hence the complete statement of the work must exhibit the conflict of these two principles, each of which is victorious, though in different groups of characters.

The play will be most easily grasped by dividing it into three movements. The first represents the conflict — love is in a struggle with study, and is not only victorious in this one case, but also in other relations which are introduced. The second is the mutual revelation of the secret passion; its triumph is acknowledged, and even defended; the oath of asceticism is openly violated, and the violation is supported by all. Here, in particular, the comic effect of the purely studious life is brought in; it results in pedantic folly. The third movement has, in general, the nature of retribution; the higher group are teased, tricked, and cajoled by the ladies — are beaten at their own game of intellectual dexterity, are deferred in their hopes for a year, with some additional penalties. The lower group have their erudition reduced to a comic nullity in the ridiculous farce of the Nine Worthies.

I.

The play opens with the fundamental point — the King has resolved to devote himself for three years to study and contemplation, and for that purpose has drawn up some rigid rules which are to govern him and his associates. His motive is to make his court as celebrated as the ancient Academe — to cause Navarre, his kingdom, to be the wonder of the world, and to have his own name live in future ages. Still, we must not say that the pursuit of fame constitutes the thought of the work; such a statement is altogether too vague and incomplete; the emphatic point here is: The pursuit of learning, as the channel through which ambition is gratified, collides with love. Besides other less important regulations whose object is to enforce abstinence, the main one can be at once given — the complete renunciation of the society of women. Here is the pivot upon which the whole action turns. The ethical basis, too, should not be forgotten — man, in the execution of his plans, abjures the Family; the latter, however, as an institution, must prove itself the more powerful through its emotion, namely, love. Thus the play moves from love violated by study to love triumphant over a one-sided life of erudition.

The three associates of the King give their

assent, and their scheme is ready for a beginning. But there is one of their number, called Biron, who has some objections to these austere conditions. He wants to study, yet he desires to enjoy the world at the same time; indeed, he very clearly sees and states the insufficiency of mere learning—his doctrine is that men may grow blind intellectually by reading; thus he prepares us for the pedants. But particularly that clause, "not to see a woman," is offensive to him; the god of love rules the world; he knows that he cannot resist a divinity, and that the others can just as little; he, therefore, prophesies the speedy perjury of the whole company if they take such an oath. In fact, the plan is clearly impossible, for already the French monarch's daughter, with three attendant ladies, is at the gates on an embassy, and must be received by the King. But Biron is not the person to stand back; he swears observance to the regulations, though manifestly the entire scheme is against his judgment.

1. Thus the conflict opens. Ascetic life undertakes to suppress all desire and passion, and, to make it effective, the supreme ruler of the State enforces it by penalties for violation. But what is this violation which the Poet at once thrusts before our eyes? The scene cannot be told in its details to the reader; suffice it to say that already one of the rigid injunctions has been set flagrantly at naught within the very limits of the

"little Academe," and the guilty couple, Costard and Jaquenetta, are brought into the presence of the King. Here we behold the revolt of nature, in its rudest form, against the ascetic ordinance; passion, on its purely animal side, is introduced in all its nakedness, to show one of the Titanic forces with which the realm of discipline has to contend. Love without its ethical element, as mere natural impulse, has thus assailed this student-world at its very origin. While vindicating the thought of this transition, we must confess that the descent is very great and very sudden — that it gives us an uncomfortable jolt through every member. The figures here are almost too repulsive to be comic — especially Jaquenetta, for so the weaker vessel is called, is a female character whose contemplation affords little pleasure of an æsthetic kind. Such is the primitive phase of the conflict between love and study.

The next manifestation of this blind, yet unavoidable, power will be seen in the case of Don Armado. Every reader is at once reminded of Don Quixote, the outlines of whose character are quite the same. He has been a man of extensive travel; he has had good opportunities for culture, and has seen well-bred society; but all his gifts and acquirements are blasted by his vanity — vanity in its literal sense of emptiness. That is, he has no content to his life. His manners are,

therefore, ridiculous in their formality; his thoughts fall into the wildest extravagance; his conduct has the single attribute of empty pomposity. Now, when such a person comes to write or to talk, we must expect the same characteristics—it will be a burlesque on all sensible writing and talking. Don Armado possesses imagination, but it is an imagination which flies through the universe because of its emptiness. He has the gift of language, whose excess, however, chokes its own purport. Still, he lays stress upon his learning, and contrasts himself with Costard, who is unlettered; but his education has made him only the greater fool. To bring his grandiose pretensions into a more striking light, to him is given, as a companion, Moth — who is short in stature, but keen in understanding — who at once reduces to absurdity his thrasonical action and language. Thus Moth is a kind of clown, who consciously burlesques the manner and expressions of his master.

But to make this Don Armado a constituent part of the play he must be shown in love. The maiden for whom his heart is in flames is Jaquenetta, whose career has been hitherto touched upon very lightly. Her ethical violation appears to be no obstacle at all; chastity is for him an unnecessary element of love, if he be judged by his action. He is thus reduced to a level with Costard — indeed, below the latter, who is at

least the first lover, if we leave out of account a doubtful passage towards the end of the play. Now, does this act spring from his character? Don Armado was before declared to be without content to life; he has no true, substantial existence; hence he does not possess the ethical element, though he is not a villain. His emptiness will account for this seemingly strange freak; though void of everything else, he will be provided by nature with physical passion; the combination of these two elements will bring him to relish such an unsavory piece of flesh as Jaquenetta. Hence this relation is consistent with his character, but it is, nevertheless, offensive, especially as Don Armado has done nothing for which he should receive such a punishment. In his delusions he is wholly unconscious, and affects us with a touch of sympathy, though he may not know the poetical wrong done to him.

Such is the low group of comic characters belonging to the first movement; they represent, in general, the triumph of love in its sensual phase. Costard is an ignorant boor, while Don Armado is a cultivated fantastic; though so different in other respects, both agree in their fundamental relation to the play — they represent passion in its natural impulse, without its ethical basis. We may now turn to the group of elevated characters. In them love is shown in its higher and purer manifestation — its end is the Family, but

its conflict with the cloistered life of learning is brought out in the plainest and most decisive manner.

2. The Princess of France, with her three attendant ladies, has arrived, and is waiting to be received. They have heard of the vow which the King and his three lords have taken; it were a great pity if such an untoward occurrence would prevent the two triple sets from pairing off. But we are here astonished to learn that each of the three ladies has met her man before, and knows his character. The truth is, therefore, that they are all in love, and the present visit really is a courting expedition; the women are going to storm the castle of learning, and bring its inmates under the yoke of marriage. Now appear the King and his lords; the business of the Princess, though it looks like a pretext, is canvassed; the other couples indulge in a merry combat of wit. Boyet, who acts as the mediator for the ladies, sees through the whole transaction, and expresses its object; he is a courtier of long experience, and particularly skillful in matters of the present kind; in token of his dexterity he is entitled an "old love-monger," and "Cupid's grandfather." He has observed that the King was touched with the sacred flame at the interview, and recounts with ready eloquence the manifold signs which he noted, as proofs of his opinion.

The result of their meeting it is not difficult to foretell; love has asserted its power in the breasts of all the students. Biron, in his soliloquy, gives expression to what the others feel; against his will, against his knowledge, he has been conquered and confesses his humiliation. He contemns the act; he berates himself and berates women — it cannot be helped, yield he must. The "almighty little" god, Dan Cupid, has punished him for his vow; now begins sighing, suing, sonneting. It will thus be seen that love has entered the student-world and destroyed it; the individual purpose is gone, being banished by an intruder. Still, each person is seeking to preserve an outward semblance of fidelity to his oath, and to keep his internal condition from the knowledge of the rest of his associates. Thus ends what was stated to be the first movement— Navarre, which represents the realm of learning and austerity, is in conflict with various phases of love; the latter has already secured its first triumph in the emotional nature of each individual.

II.

1. We can now pass to the second movement, in which new elements are introduced. The low group is here subordinate in importance, though not entirely dropped; but its peculiar function of representing sensual love quite disappears.

The letter of Don Armado is the last incident in this connection; the Poet probably thought that he had shown to a sufficient degree the manifestation of mere passion. But now he proceeds to introduce a new group of comic characters, and with them a new principle. It is pedantry, with its two representatives — Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel, the curate; to them is added the constable, Dull, who, though ignorant, is also pedantic, as is seen mainly in his use of words. Here learning is exhibited in one of its phases — it has made a monstrous puff-ball out of mediocrity. Such is the possible outcome of a life devoted to mere erudition — of a life which cuts out and throws away the essence of human existence, namely institutions. Learning is only a means; if it be made the absolute end, it produces a Holofernes — that is, it renders man comic. For his object is absurd and nugatory; yet, at the same time, he is supposed to be the most intelligent of human kind, being so highly educated. The relation of this group to the drama must, therefore, be comprehended; the result of the King's cloistered study is here seen — Navarre would become, not an Academe, but the Pedant's Paradise.

In Holofernes all the extravagancies of a formal erudition are united. Crumbs of Latin are scattered through his conversation — the lean pickings from some grammar; then he writes

poetry, which is full of alliteration and play on words, but without sense. The Poet has, doubtless, satirized in him certain literary tendencies of the time; and it has been often supposed that he had before his mind well-known individuals in real life. Holofernes also is made to criticise Biron's sonnet, which he condemns as "neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention." His salient trait is manifest; he is a man who feeds on the husks of learning with far greater relish than on the kernel; indeed, for him learning has no kernel. Even Costard, the ignorant boor, as well as Moth, ridicule his folly. Sir Nathaniel, the country curate, who is his admirer and follower, is a step lower. In general, therefore, the first comic group represented love in its one-sidedness, namely, sensual passion; the second comic group represents erudition in its one-sidedness, namely, pompous pedantry; both taken together show the comic extremes of love on the one hand, and study on the other. The implication seems to be that a judicious admixture of the two is the golden mean.

2. The elevated group of characters may next be considered. The King and his young lords have been already captivated, though each tried to keep his condition concealed from the others. Now the truth is to be revealed to all, and the new situation to be accepted. Biron is wandering alone in the forest; he is in a deadly struggle

with his emotion; he cannot free himself from its power. He hides himself when he sees the King coming; the latter, too, is groaning from Cupid's "bird-bolt under the left pap," and gives vent to his feelings in a sonnet to his mistress. In like manner the King secretes himself when he sees Longaville passing that way, who also confesses to the trees his griefs, and reads his poetical effusion. The latter, too, hides himself when, last of all, Dumaine appears, who does just like the rest, for he also must have a lyrical expression of his passion. At this point each comes out of his hiding-place in order; the revelation has to be made; all are equally guilty of the trespass; all are in love, and are trying to conceal it from one another. Biron — who, on account of being the first one in the forest, thought to escape detection — is also discovered; the fragment of a torn letter tells the whole story.

What now about the oaths? The violation has taken place; is there any defense? Biron — who, it will be recollected, protested against the vow at the beginning — at once undertakes to vindicate their conduct. His lengthy speech contains the best statement in the play concerning its own purport. He declares that, when they swore "to fast, to study, and to see no woman," they committed "flat treason 'gainst the state of youth;" it was a violation of the right of love.

The true objects of study, the real writings over which young men should pore, are those masterpieces of Nature — woman's eyes: —

> "From woman's eyes this doctrine I derive:
> They are the ground, the books, the Academes,
> From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire."

The transition is here stated clearly enough — Navarre has turned into a love-land; the Academe has changed to some female eye, into which each one of them is diligently looking. Thus the student-world dissolves apace, and its lofty ambition melts to a cloud. Such is the result on the one side — if study be asserted against love, the latter will be triumphant.

But there is something more in Biron's speech which ought to be considered — "this universal plodding prisons up the nimble spirits" — men become "barren practicers" of learning, who find no reward of their heavy toil; in other words, the product of mere study is the dry pedant — a Holofernes. Thus the second movement gives a double aspect of the two colliding principles of the drama — study triumphs, terminating in pedantry; love triumphs, terminating in the dissolution of the ascetic realm.

III.

1. The third movement now begins. It brings to a true conclusion what has gone before, and

also has a distinct tinge of its own. The notion of retribution gives it the peculiar element which marks it as a separate part. Both the previous comic groups unite, though Holofernes, with his erudition, is the leading character. He suggests the representation of the Nine Worthies of antiquity for the entertainment of the King and Princess; learning proposes to exhibit the heroic personages whose fame is a part of the world's history. How will it grasp and embody them? It is the Poet's own Dramatic Art which is here called upon to present anew the great characters of the Past; can a Holofernes succeed in such an attempt? The result may be confidently predicted — it is the narrow, ridiculous conception of the pedagogue which is seen in the execution of the plan; the mighty individualities of old are burlesqued — are turned into comic figures of the lowest order. Such are the fruits of mere erudition in its chosen field; it cannot comprehend itself, nor impart to others what is great and true in the Past; it feeds on husks and leaves the kernel untouched. But the retributive element must not be forgotten — subjected to the criticism of his audience, his work perishes; the representation is torn to tatters by the sneers and sarcasms of the spectators. Such is the fate of this product of learning; it is destroyed by the people to whom it is addressed, and who carry into realization what logically lies in such an

attempt. Thus mere erudition has received its penalty.

2. Of the elevated group the men were last seen in the act of mutually acknowledging their passion, and of defending the violation of their oath. The right of love was asserted to be higher than fidelity to a vow. But the greater half of their labor remains to be done; they have not yet won their ladies— off they start to the trial. Here comes the opposition. The ladies in every possible manner trick, cajole, and deride the lords; the latter first appear in mask as Russians, but they are unknown; then they return in their ordinary garments and continue their suit; a sparkling display of wit, puns, and conceits fills the time with the merriest sport. It is unnecessary to follow the Poet in his details, or to note the slight differences of personal appearance and character in this sportive group; the result is plain —the book-men, with all their learning and wisdom, are made to suffer a defeat, in their own special province, at the hands of the ladies, who worry them with the sharpest sayings, and exhibit the greater intellectual keenness. But the object of wooing is marriage — to which the men are ready to advance at once, making, in the meantime, loud protestations of their love. But they cannot be believed, for they have just broken an oath; the ladies argue that they will be quite as ready to disregard a second vow.

Thus the logic of their action is brought home to them; before credence can be given them, they must show by a year's penance the sincerity of their professions, as well as a change of life. Then a marital pledge will be possible. Thus Love's Labor is both lost and won — there is the punishment for the violation by deferring the union; but ultimately this ascetic world is to pass into the Family as the higher sphere, in which the true solution of the collision must be found. Both threads of the last movement, however, will be seen to possess a retributive element — pedantic erudition beholds its own achievements reduced to nothing, and the violated oath demands a year's chastisement.

The general scheme which underlies the drama will now be manifest. Learning, in the futherance of its own end, calls for the abnegation of the Family; but the latter, through its all-powerful emotion — love — rises up and puts down its enemy. Institutions are the higher principle; neither culture nor religion must place a bar to their entrance, for they are really the essence of both. It is a theme upon which the Poet has often touched, and in which he shows his fealty to the thought of the modern world. Nor will the attentive reader fail to supply the historical illustration. Monasticism was long supposed to be the chief handmaid of learning; an ascetic life was thought to be the main condition of the

pursuit of science. But human progress has solved the conflict — has reconciled a career devoted to study with the Family; the Academe is not found in the secluded cloister, but can exist in the domestic institution. Nor has the drama failed to show the one-sided results of the two conflicting principles: Love, without the Family, is sensuality; and study, without some corrective — that it is the Family which is this corrective is rather implied than declared — degenerates into fantastic mummery.

Such seems to be the essential organization of the present drama. But there is many a little turn which has not been accounted for, and which seems to have but a slight relation to the main action. As was stated in the beginning, the work has not a few capricious elements; it has eddies, counter-currents, and much light surf dashing in every direction; still, the main volume rolls on and completes its natural course, around which is playing all this sportive wantonness. The object has been to trace merely the general current of the stream for any reader who may happen to want a little guidance; while he is left to explore by himself all the small bays and sinuosities, as well as to snuff the exhilarating spray which hovers over its waters.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

This is, doubtless, one of the youthful plays of Shakespeare. Its theme is the passion of youth; fullness and warmth characterize its descriptions, and, at the same time, there is a feeling of resignation to the power of love which amounts to weakness. The coloring is peculiar and uniform throughout; there is felt the lassitude of the stricken shepherd; there is seen the complete absorption of the individual in the fancy and emotions. The mood of the Poet is diffused through the entire work, giving it the fragrance as well as the languor of early Spring — the season which in so many ways represents youth. The tone often resembles that of the pastoral romances of Spain and Italy; it is the feeling of the lorn lover, who has lost himself and wanders round in a dreamy quest like a shadow. Such is the artistic hue which colors this drama, and gives its distinctive characteristic; it is the true poetic element, which no analysis can reach, and which can only be felt. For the poetry, therefore, the reader must go to the poem; criticism may unfold the thought which is the controlling principle in every

work of art, though it cannot be expected to take the place of that work.

In the present drama the thought is not so profound, the organic structure is not so perfect, the characterization is not so rich, as they are seen in later works; but the germs of many of the most beautiful parts of Shakespeare are to be found here. The reader is continually reminded of scenes, incidents, and motives which occur in other plays. But the peculiar and striking fact is that the Poet gives in this play the outlines of his most notable literary form, namely, the Mediated Drama, together with the introduction of the idyllic realm to harmonize the conflicts of life. Here it is, though in an incipient stage; the outlaws in the forest form a world of their own, which becomes the great instrumentality for doing justice to the wronged, for inflicting retribution upon the guilty, and for restoring to society its banished members.

We may now pass to consider the organization of the drama. There are three movements, though they are are not marked with such precision as in some other plays, nor have they quite the same order and signification. The first movement exhibits the two chief male characters as devoted friends on the one hand, and as devoted lovers on the other. The emotional unity which cements one individual to another, and makes both, as it were, a single person, is here shown in its two

most important phases. Friendship and love, therefore, constitute the theme — the former existing, in its highest and truest manifestation, mainly between people of the same sex, the latter mainly between people of different sexes. The second movement shows the disruption of this unity in both directions; through the faithlessness of one person the friends are separated and the lovers torn asunder. Here occur the struggles and conflicts which give to the drama its serious tone, though it still remain in the realm of Pure Comedy. The third movement portrays the return out of this state of disruption, the restoration of friendship and love, and the harmonious solution of all the conflicts. The instrumentality is the world of outlaws.

I.

1. The two friends are first introduced, who, however, at once separate — the one, Valentine, is eager to set out on his travels; the other, Proteus, remains at home because he is inthralled by love. Valentine derides the condition of his friend, who is so utterly absorbed by his passion, and then departs. The thread of which Proteus is the center may now be followed to its conclusion, in the first movement. Julia is the name of the loved one; through her shrewd waiting-woman she has received a letter from Proteus

containing a declaration of his affection. After a pretended resistance and various strange caprices she yields to the influence of the winged god — the sufficient reason being because she is loved, and must requite the affection unless there is some good ground for not doing so. Nor is any motive given for the love of Proteus, except that he loves. Man and woman belong together, and will come together unless there is some excellent reason for their remaining asunder; the burden of proof lies on the side of separation — not of union, which can always be taken for granted. Nature, with a whip of scorpions, drives the human being as an isolated individual into his rational existence in the Family. Love, with its unrest, is just the manifestation of insufficiency; the single person is not adequate to the truest and happiest life. Proteus and Julia thus, in a rapid whirl, love, declare, pledge.

But now comes the painful separation. The father of Proteus is not yet satisfied with his son's education; he is determined to send him abroad to see the world and to gain its experience. Proteus, while reading a missive from the fair Julia, is surprised by the old man; the boy fibs stoutly, but thereby falls into his own trap. Off he must; the parent will not be trifled with. There ensues the parting scene between the lovers, with the oaths of eternal fidelity — soon to be broken — and the customary accompani-

ment of tears and sighs. Such is the external separation. The destination of Proteus is the court of Milan, where he will meet his old friend, Valentine.

2. We shall now go back and pick up Valentine's thread, and see what he has been doing. We beheld him setting out upon his travels with many a jibe and derisive taunt against love and its thralls; but retribution has come, and the mighty traveler has been stopped in his journey, at Milan, by the eyes of Silvia, the Duke's beautiful daughter. But the most gratifying news comes through his knowing servant, Speed — his affection is reciprocated. Indeed, the young lady herself writes a note, which conveys the same information in a somewhat circuitous, yet quite intelligible, manner. But, alackaday! the course of true love never did run smooth — at least in a comedy; the much-employed, time-honored obstacle rears its front — papa is opposed. Also, the old wealthy suitor, that goblin of youthful lovers and favorite of parents, puts in his appearance, and is, of course, supported by the father. Thurio is his name. The conflict is inevitable; it opens with a few flashing sky-rockets of wit between the combatants, but it is clear that heavy artillery will be brought in before the war is over. The principles which collide are the right of choice on the part of the daughter against the will of the parent. The outcome of

the struggle is indicated in the mere statement — the daughter must triumph, her right must be maintained, even at the expense of disobeying and deceiving her father. If he demands conditions which render the Family impossible, the Family must set him aside; such, at least, is Shakespeare's solution.

Just at this most interesting point of the struggle Proteus arrives at court, and by his conduct changes the whole attitude of affairs. Instead of the ordinary two-sided combat, it becomes an intricate triple fight, with abundance of stratagem and treachery. This part will be developed in the next movement. We have had brought before us the double relation of friendship and love; there has also been an external separation in each. Still, the internal bond has not been destroyed by absence; fidelity to both principles remains as yet in the hearts of all.

A word may be said here upon the two clowns and their function in the play. It will be noticed that both Valentine and Proteus are each provided with such an attendant. The main duty of the clown is to give a comic reflection of the actions of his master. The latter is in earnest, employs elevated language, moves in high life, and the Poet usually puts his words in a metrical form; while the former belongs to low life, deals in coarse jests, and speaks the rude slang of the hour. It is the same content viewed from the

poetic and from the prosaic stand-point — from refined sensibility and from gross sensuality. Nor is the most serious, and even affecting, theme to be treated without presenting its ludicrous side. Thus there is always a double reflection of the action, which makes the work complete. The clowns seem to be partly imitating, and to be partly mocking, the manner and circumstances of their superiors; the effect is that of a burlesque. Their prototype is to be found in Spanish and Italian comedy, from which Shakespeare in his earlier plays was in the habit of freely borrowing. Hereafter he will elevate these somewhat stiff and conventional figures into living beings; instead of a clownish and monotonous imitation, he will pour into them a varied and independent comic character, which is connected with the main theme through itself and not through another person of the play.

Between Launce and Speed a close examination will find a few, but not very important, differences. The perplexing fact is that each is so different from himself at different times. Launce, for instance, is in one place a stupid fool, while in another place he manifests the keenest intelligence. The same discrepancy may be noticed particularly in the case of Valentine. In fact, the characterization in this drama is by no means fine and consistent always; it betrays the youthful, uncertain hand. Still, the outlines are all

here; the interest is to trace the development of these rude features into the most beautiful and ideal forms.

II.

1. The second movement, which portrays the conflict and dissolution of the ties just mentioned, is next in the order of explanation. Proteus has come to the court of Milan; is immediately admitted into the Duke's confidence upon the recommendation of his friend, who also receives him with affection and joy. But, he faithless to Julia, at once falls in love with Silvia, the chosen one of his friend. This sudden change rests in his susceptible disposition; it requires the presence of the fair object to keep up his fidelity. He is unable to subordinate emotion to reason; in his soliloquies he states the true principle of his action — love is above duty. The result is, he commits a deed of triple treachery — he is faithless to friendship, to love, to hospitality. He is truly the victim of passion, the thrall of love, which drags him from one object to another in hopeless bonds. Such is emotion without the permanent, rational element; it drives man into a violation of all honor and virtue.

The conflict of Valentine with the will of the parent, the Duke, has been already noted. To bring his purpose to a triumphant conclusion he

proposes an elopement, the time and manner of which he confides to Proteus, who goes at once and tells it to the father. The Duke, by a very ingenious scheme of dissimulation, succeeds in making Valentine reveal his plan, and then upon the spot pronounces his banishment. Thus results another separation of lovers. Throughout this scene the reader is continually reminded of *Romeo and Juliet*, both by the incidents and the coloring. Proteus now must continue his treachery; he has to be false to Thurio and the Duke. But his suit is unsuccessful; Silvia, whose character is fidelity to love, reproaches him for his faithlessness to his betrothed, and thrusts home with logical keenness the nature of his deed — you have been untrue to her, you will be untrue to me.

The clowns perform their function as before — they give a distorted, but comic, reflection of the main action. The romantic love of the high-bred suitors is caricatured in the affair concerning the milk-maid, whose homely qualities have the force of real life. Launce foreshadows the faithlessness and villainy of his master. He, too, has a subordinate, namely, his dog; this relation is a humorous image of his own relation to those above himself. Launce makes long speeches, and has more to say than Speed, who seems to be the more prying and the less clownish character. Lucetta, the serving-woman of Julia, ought per-

haps to be placed in the same general category with Speed and Launce, though she surpasses both in refinement.

2. The second thread of this movement is the actions and adventures of the two women, Julia and Silvia. The Poet has not made the separation here implied by these threads except in a few scenes, but for the convenience of the analysis, some such division may be permitted. Both these characters have the fundamental type which is seen in all of Shakespeare's women — devotion to the Family. Those whom he wishes to portray as good are endowed with this one highest purpose, to which all their other qualities are subservient. They are depicted with various degrees of intellectual ability, and with various degrees of power of will; but they are all women, and ultimately unite in the single trait of supreme womanhood. Julia, here so modest and gentle in her nature, assumes the garments of a page in order to go to Proteus; her devotion supplies the courage to accomplish such a bold act, though its audacity in no sense taints her innate modesty. She discovers the faithlessness of her lover; the premonition of her waiting-maid has turned out true. With her own eyes she beholds Proteus wooing Silvia; indeed, she, in her disguised habit, carries to the latter a missive of love and her own token of betrothal from the perfidious gallant.

What will she now do? Not revenge, nor even jealousy, fires her bosom — she remains true to her principle; her feeling with Proteus is so intimate that she even pities his unrequited love for Silvia. His case is also her own; her affection blends with his suffering and partakes of it, though her success depends just upon his want of success. Love has here reached quite the point of self-contradiction; it hugs the object which destroys the end of its being. Essentially the same character and essentially the same incidents will be repeated by the Poet in at least four of his later plays.

Silvia has also the characteristic trait of devotion, and manifests it in its full intensity. Her struggle is different from that of Julia — it lies with the will of her father. She has also to withstand the importunate suits of Thurio and Proteus, but this does not cost her much trouble. She has been separated from her lover by the violent mandate of her parent, but the separation is only external; both are still one in emotion, though asunder in space. Julia's case is more difficult, for the separation is internal, since Proteus has proved faithless. Silvia thus has only to get rid of the intervening distance in order to reach her purpose, which requirement she at once proceeds to carry out; for the true existence of the Family is her highest end; her courage

and daring will rise to the emergency; she will even defy an otherwise valid ethical principle, namely, parental authority. Now follows her flight; she finds a certain Sir Eglamour, who lends both sympathy and aid. But whither will she go? She must follow Valentine, and, hence, it is necessary for us to go back and look after him.

At this point we observe one of Shakespeare's most peculiar and effective dramatic means. It is the transition to a primitive or idyllic state in order to cure the wrongs of society. The latter falls into strife and injustice; it becomes destructive of institutions which lie at its own foundation; man no longer finds his abode in it, but must leave it in order to get rid of its oppression. Valentine and Silvia desire to form a family, placing it upon its true and only possible basis; the parent, who is also the ruler of the State, interferes to disrupt the union. The Family must flee unless it cease to exist, since its very essence is assailed by the supreme authority of the country. It must find a spot where there is no such authority; hence it betakes itself to the woods — to an idyllic life, in which it is free from the conflicts of society. The lovers thus have gone to a forest, whose sole inhabitants are outlaws — that is, those who have renounced the civil authority of the land.

III.

The third movement, which now follows, will portray this World of Outlaws, and that which it brings about through its influence. Already in the first scene of the Fourth Act is a description of its nature and origin. The outlaws tell what they have done — it is some offense against the laws of the country which they have committed, and which compelled them to flee from society; yet the Poet has shaded lightly their deeds, for, though they were guilty, they were not mean in their crimes. The allusion to Robin Hood, the English ideal of chivalric brigandage, gives the true tinge to their character. The superior breeding and learning of Valentine, who happens to pass through their abode, conquers at once their esteem; he consents to become their chieftain on the honorable condition that they "do no outrages on silly women and poor passengers." But they have never done this, and strongly asseverate that they "detest such vile practices." Robin Hood is clearly the model of these Knights of the Forest. They have violated and deserted the institutions of men, but they still seek to preserve personal honor.

1. Silvia also flies in order to avoid the conflict with the mandates of society. She must, therefore, go where she will find no oppressive social

order standing in the way of her purpose; there she will find Valentine, who has been forced to depart for the same realm. Union is now possible, since all restriction is removed; the Family can be built up from the foundation. But this new world has thus become antagonistic both to the authority of the parent and to the authority of the ruler; it has also deprived the two unrequited lovers of their prey. The result is that, when the flight of Silvia becomes known, the Duke, Thurio, and Proteus — the latter attended now by the faithful Julia — follow at once the runaway to the forest. Society thus attempts to assert itself against this other world which has sprung up at its side; its representatives try to restore by force what it has lost. It will be seen in the end how they succeed.

Silvia is at first captured by some of the outlaws, but is retaken by Proteus, who seizes the opportunity to press his suit anew. She rejects his advances with her old reproaches of his infidelity to Julia; then he dares to essay violence. At this moment Valentine, who has heard the whole conversation in his hiding-place, comes forward; he has discovered the treachery — his supposed friend has been the cause of all his misfortunes. But now follows the sudden change. Proteus repents of his conduct and expresses the deepest contrition. Surprise awaits us again. Valentine just as sud-

denly forgives him, which alacrity may be tolerated on account of the previous friendship; but when Valentine offers to surrender to him the devoted Silvia — to subordinate true love to treacherous friendship — both feeling and reason protest to Heaven. It is almost impossible to think that Shakespeare is the author of the passage. But Julia is here to settle the difficulty. She now throws off her disguise; her presence restores the affection of her inconstant lover; the two pairs are thus free from both the internal and the external conflict; friendship and love have passed through their struggle into complete harmony and reconciliation. Such is the result of the love-collision.

2. Now comes the final act — the restoration to parent and to society. The Duke and Thurio are brought in by the outlaws; Thurio cowardly resigns his claim to the hand of Silvia in the presence of Valentine; the latter has the true element of union, namely, requited love, whose right can now in this realm be enforced. The father then relents and is reconciled; this obstacle is thus swept away. Finally, the Duke, as ruler, pardons the bandits at the intercession of Valentine, and they all go back to the place whence they had fled. Thus the World of Outlaws is dissolved, and no longer stands in hostility to legal authority; the internal disruption of society is also healed, and the conflict in the Family has

received its solution. This is the return to the world of institutions; the reconciliation with Family and State is complete; and the personal relations of friendship and love, which were so disturbed, are restored to their pristine energy.

The elaboration here presented is, no doubt, fuller than the mere text of this play warrants. But, for the sake of the light which is thrown upon a whole series of the Poet's works, and for the sake of illustrating his most peculiar and original dramatic form, the present play is worthy of the most careful study and analysis. It is, however, only a germ, which has not yet unfolded, but which shows the future flower in all its details. A comparison with his later procedure in the ideal class of mediated dramas will demonstrate the immense advance in depth and completeness of treatment, but will also prove that every essential element is to be found embryonically in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Hereafter he will free his idyllic realm from its present taint of illegality and crime, for now he almost seems through its use to excuse the wicked deed; he will also portray it with far greater fullness and beauty, and give to it a more definite place in the action. Hereafter, too, he will assign supreme validity to repentance, which is now so lightly and so unsatisfactorily dismissed. The restoration also will be more strongly emphasized, and, indeed, will be of itself elevated

to an entire movement of a play. Finally, the divisions of the action will be changed to their true logical order: The Disruption, the Mediation through an idyllic world, the Restoration. It will be seen that this play belongs to the class of mediated dramas, whose form and instrumentalities it has throughout; also it leans toward the purely comic treatment.

Such is unquestionably the species to which *Two Gentlemen of Verona* belongs, but its other relations to the works of the Poet are worthy of notice. Julia, with her disguise and her situation, is reproduced in *Twelfth Night* in the person of Viola, though the latter is in every way more complete. In fact, no comparison can better show the difference between the youthful possibility and the mature realization of a great artist than a comparison of these two characters. A less distinct adumbration of the traits will be found in Portia, Imogen, Helena, and others. Then, again, the reflections of Valentine in the forest recalls vividly the soliloquy of the gentle Duke in *As You Like It*. But the resemblance to *Romeo and Juliet* is the most intimate of all. The two stories of the dramas often seem to run together; there is the same collision with the parent and with the rejected suitor; there are often noticed the same incidents and the same instrumentalities, even down to the ladder of ropes; there is the same style of imagery, language, and versification; we observe a like extravagance of

the emotions, particularly of love; there are the same general outlines of characterization. But the quality which links these two dramas together most closely is the tone which runs through each, the indescribable coloring which leaves all its hues in the feelings and fancy, so that the mind is strongly impressed with the conclusion that both plays must have been written in the same mood and about the same time.

In the play there is much beautiful expression, but it seems to be uttered for its own sake often; that is, it does not spring from the character or the situation. We feel the idyllic beauty of many passages, but we also feel the Poet enjoying himself in his own poetry, in the exercise of his sweet gift. Part of the story seems to have been derived from a romance written in Spanish, called *Diana enamorada*, by a Portuguese poet, Jorge de Montemayor, and the drama is filled with the soft romantic air of the South. Like other comedies of the poet there is the tendency to the employment of characters by pairs — a pair of gentlemen, a pair of ladies, a pair of fathers, a pair of clowns. Of course all dialogue demands two speakers at least.

It is clear that in this early drama Shakespeare sees the necessity of repentance for the mediation of the guilty man. Valentine says: —

> Who by repentance is not satisfied,
> Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased,
> By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased.

Proteus, whose name suggests his many transformations though love, declares his "hearty sorrow" as his "ransom for offense;" and we hope his fickleness has been repented of when he says: "I do truly suffer, as e'er I did commit." Still the poet's idea of repentance is to deepen until it becomes, in the last period of his life, the great mediatorial axis of the dramatic movement. If, in this respect, we compare the present play with *Winter's Tale*, we may see on what path and to what point he advanced in his spiritual development.

Still the main fact which links this play with the grand Shakespearian series is the beginning we trace in it of the idyllic world. Particularly the allusion to Robin Hood connects it with a phase of old English life and poetry, and joins it to the following play *As You Like It*, in which a similar allusion occurs, though the two dramas lie eight or ten years apart in time.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

In this drama we see placed in striking contrast the actual and the idyllic world. The former contains society, state, business, and their manifold interests and complications; the latter is the simple pastoral existence, without care, struggle, or occupation — almost without want. The former is the world of Reason, and exhibits man in his rational development, and for this very cause has within it the deepest and most terrific contradictions. The loftier the summit the greater the fall; the more highly organized a society the mightier are the collisions slumbering or struggling in its bosom. But an idyllic existence is almost without contradiction, and, hence, it happens that men sometimes flee from a more concrete social life, in order to get rid of its difficulties, and betake themselves to the simple state of the shepherd.

More commonly, however, they remain in society, but construct, with the aid of imagination, a world of their own, suited exactly to their notion of things, whither they can flee out of the rugged and disagreeable reality surrounding

them. Such a realm may be called the ideal, as distinguished from the idyllic, though both have the same fundamental principle, since they are abstractions from actual existence. An imaginary world of this kind has always been a favorite theme with a certain class of minds, particularly with the poets and theologians. But in some social conditions, especially in periods of revolution and disintegration, it is the resort to which all intelligence flees, and the construction of ideal societies becomes a phase of national consciousness. Such a state is generally thrown back into the distant past, long antecedent to history when man was absolutely innocent, and even the lower animals shared in his condition — that is, the negative side of man and nature is wholly eliminated, is thought away. Of this character was the Paradise of the ancient Hebrews and the Golden Age of the ancient Greeks. It will be noticed that there is a great advantage in placing this world in the past, since we are thus continually receding from it, while, according to the well-known law of distance, it is increasing in enchantment to the spectator. But more hardy spirits have dared to project this world into the future, where it is in danger of being overtaken. Still the Millennium has thus far always kept a thousand years ahead, and it is likely to do so for an indefinite time to come.

But, now, this consciousness — so general, so

deeply grounded in human nature — the Poet proposes to make the subject of a comedy. That it is capable of a comic treatment is manifest when we reflect that the very realization of the ideal world must be its annihilation, for then it is real and no longer ideal. Thus the pursuit of such an end, as absolute and final, is contradictory and null in itself, since it must terminate in just the opposite of that which is sought. Now, Comedy exhibits the individual pursuing ends which are nugatory, and, therefore, destroy themselves in their realization. That the Poet had this consciousness in mind is clear from his allusions to Robin Hood, the English ideal hero of the forest; and still more plainly does the same fact appear when he speaks of "those who fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world," an obvious reference to the Greek ideal realm. To this latter he likens the Forest of Arden, a comparison by which he lets us know what he meant by that forest.

But it is through beholding the organization of the drama that the purpose of the Poet will be most clearly revealed. There are three movements, which, however, are merely the essential phases of one and the same general process. The first movement depicts the Real World of Wrong, in which institutions have fallen into conflict, and in which the individual is assailed in his personal rights. Here there are two threads, of which the

central figures are, respectively, a man and a woman — Orlando and Rosalind. Both are the victims of wrong in this unsettled society; both have to flee from domestic and political oppression; they also become enamored of one another— the common bond of misfortune easily changes to the common bond of love. The second movement portrays the Idyllic Realm to which the individual has fled in order to get rid of the institutional world and its injustice; it is the simple pastoral and sylvan life before society. Here also there are essentially two threads; the first is the banished Duke and lords, who have been driven off by the existing wrongs of the civilized State and have gone to the woods, there to dwell in the primitive peace of nature; the second thread is made up of three groups, which must be considered together — that of Orlando and his servant, and his brother; that of Rosalind and Celia, and the clown; and, finally, that of the native shepherds. The third movement is the restoration of the Real World of Right — the idyllic realm dissolves of its own inherent necessity, and there is a complete return of the banished members to society, which is healed of its wrong by the departure and repentance of the usurping Duke.

I.

We shall now glance at the incidents of the play, and trace the first movement through its

various parts. This unfolds, as before said, the Real World of Wrong; those institutions which ought to protect man's rights, have assailed them; society is corrupted, and perverted from its high purpose. This movement is essentially limited to the First Act, though the wrongful Duke momentarily flits before us several times afterwards. Here two leading characters are introduced, a man and a woman, who are able to endure insult and injustice, and to draw from their discipline the true result of life. Wrong cannot destroy, but can only bring out and confirm their integrity of soul. Both Orlando and Rosalind have this indestructible germ of character, each in a different way; they become the heroes not only of their own, but of society's rescue.

Another fact is brought out in this movement. The world is truly in a state of wrong and dissolution, yet the opposite force is also setting in; under destruction reconstruction is in the act of being born. The principle of it is Love, the grand social organizer, and primal founder of all institutions; here it appears in its first beautiful, all-subduing shape, the love of man and woman. It leads straightway to the Family; the Family rises to the State, gives the primitive basis for the Church, in fact begets and nourishes with its mother's milk the whole realm of institutional life, as it begets and nourishes man himself. Over this social ruin, then, we see floating the

form of Love, as winged Eros, in the old fable, was the first to rise out of primeval Chaos. The harbinger of the new society thus appears amid the successful violence of the old, in the very victory of wrong lurks its defeat. This result is now to be shown in the two leading characters, each of which can be unfolded on its own line, till they come together.

1. Orlando has been deprived of his share in the paternal estate by his brother Oliver, and, what is much worse, his education has been utterly neglected, in violation of the will of his father. Here is shown the wrong in the Family; but this is not all. The rightful Duke has been expelled from his government by his brother, and thus we see that the wrong extends into the State; it is not only in the reigning family but in the subject family. The play does not unfold, but rather presupposes, these two great acts of injustice, and, hence, society is portrayed as in condition of strife and contradiction. But Orlando has had his compensation, he has developed his physical nature, though his intellect may have been neglected; he exhibits his prowess first against his brother, and then at court he overcomes the Duke's wrestler. The main result of this adventure is the love which springs up between himself and Rosalind, which, however, has received the most ample and beautiful motive from the Poet. Nowhere has Shakespeare more

successfully shown the budding, blooming, and ripening of the tender passion.

But soon this world of injustice comes into full activity and manifests its inherent character. The Duke, as the violator of all individual right, must naturally become jealous of all individuals; accordingly he has banished a number of lords who seemed dangerous to his power. And so this process must continue as long as anybody is left in the country, since the existence of one man must be a continual source of fear to such a tyrant. His own child calls his disposition "rough and envious." Hence Orlando, as the son of an old enemy, excites his suspicion, and has to leave the court with precipitation. The innocent youth has simply thrown the Duke's wrestler in a fair match; but this, together with his name, is sufficient to cause his speedy flight. Orlando, though mentally untrained, has a deep natural worthiness of character; he has in himself that antithesis which in a degree belongs to Shakespeare also, and which has caused so much controversy: "never schooled, but yet learned."

But the wrongs of Orlando do not end with his departure from court. He returns to his brother's estate only to find his life conspired against there, and his condition more hopeless than ever. Accompanied by his trusty servant, Adam, a second time he betakes himself to flight. It is impossible to mistake the meaning of these scenes.

The Poet has here portrayed society in contradiction with its fundamental object; it has driven off those whom, by every tie of blood and of right, it was bound to protect; both State and Family have become the instruments of the direst injustice; on all sides we behold the *world of wrong*.

2. Such is the first thread of this movement; the second thread has its central figure, Rosalind, daughter of the former Duke, who has been driven off by his brother, the present usurper. She is not disposed to be merry under the circumstances; her cousin, Celia, tries to enliven her spirits; Touchstone, the devoted clown, also seeks to drive away the heavy hours with pleasantry. Then Orlando appears for the wrestling match. The modest, sad-visaged youth seems unequal to his enterprise, and at once excites the warm sympathy of Rosalind, who feels her own sorrowful lot in his sorrowful words and looks. But, when she finds that he is the son of an old friend of her banished father, her sympathy rapidly ripens into love, which is sealed by his worth.

Rosalind now meets with the same treatment from the suspicious Duke that Orlando has received. She is driven out of his dominions in the most wanton manner, but is accompanied by the daughter of the usurper — a just retribution upon his own family for the wrong done his brother's. The two young ladies now disguise themselves

for their journey. Rosalind assumes the garb of a man, which she retains through all her adventures in the idyllic land. Here we have the chief instrumentality of comic situation — Disguise — which furnishes the intrigue of the play, though this is by no means its sole, or even its leading, element. This disguise, too, lies in her character, nay, in her womanly character; in a time of violence, the good, being weak, is preserved by concealment; Rosalind, the woman, must show her skill by mastering destiny and maintaining her inner worth by an outer artifice.

Both Orlando and Rosalind have, therefore, to flee; each is the victim of wrong in the Family and in the State. Moreover, we see in the background the general condition of society. There is no rightful authority; the true Duke has been expelled by an usurper; many lords have been compelled to leave their country. Such is the first movement. We are now prepared to make the transition to the second movement, in which will be portrayed the Idyllic World — the sphere of mediation.

II.

These people have betaken themselves to flight; but whither are they to go? Society has wronged them, has banished them; their object must now be to find a place where the injustice of

society does not reach them, where there is no civil order. They cannot pass to another State, since, logically, the same collision would arise. The Poet's image, though particular, represents an universal truth; it would be no solution, but an evasion of the poetic problem, if these people should simply run from one country to another of the same social grade. A double process is to take place: the State is to be purified of its wrong against the individual, and the individual is to be purified of his conflict with the State. The institution is to protect man, and man is to live in harmony with the institution. Both sides must pass through the discipline; man, wronged in civilized society, quits it and goes to its opposite, which is here the Forest of Arden, into which we are ushered at the beginning of the Second Act. It shows the innocent pastoral life, free of the conflicts of civilization; its nature is well indicated by the Poet when he likens it to the Golden Age. Its essential character is determined by the fact that it is the negation of the social organism, is the simple primitive condition of man in the simple primitive society. Such is this world of mediation, in which both man and society are turned back to their very beginning, and are made to bathe afresh in the primeval fountains of their being, till they be cured of their disease. The whole movement is healing,

remedial, not tragic but comic in the deeper sense of the word.

But who are here? Four groups we note, which are to be duly ordered. The first group is made up of the banished Duke and his company; they are the old-comers, whose main distinction is that they are not lovers; they may be supposed to have left their families behind in their flight. They form, in the forest, the living background upon which the comedy of love is to play. This is the first thread. The three other groups — two are composed of new-comers and one of native shepherds — are in the main, lovers, and may be classified together as the second thread, as they are intimately connected both in meaning and incident. Upon these two lines we may watch the Idyllic Realm unfold to its end.

1. The banished Duke is supremely the optimist. He finds even "the uses of adversity" to be sweet, and draws out of them comfort and instruction; he prefers the woods to the court, and winter's icy fang to civilized luxury. Here he feels not "the penalty of Adam;" he is, like the unfallen first man, dwelling in Paradise still, which is this Forest of Arden. He is truly the idyllic character, without evil, without conflict. But it is just on this side that we feel his weakness. He is, too, without force; we catch the reason why he lost his dukedom; innocent, amiable, unsuspecting, he had not the strength to

meet conflict with conflict, and was overwhelmed by his more daring brother. Sin is not in him, nor can he see the negative element in Nature or in Man. Most fitting and beautiful it is that such a character should give the sweet prelude of this paradisaical world; he rejoices in the new situation; he makes a glowing contrast between their present life and that which they have abandoned. Here is no flattery, no ambition, no crime; he can find quite all the advantages of society in the trees, the stones and the brooks. Nature, were she only looked into, can furnish all the content of reason. Nothing can surpass the freshness and the idyllic beauty with which he describes their life in the forest; the aroma of the country is in every line. Then comes Amiens, the lyrist of the company, who embodies these sentiments in the most ethereal song. The poetic representation of their abode is thus complete.

But hold! A disagreeable contrast arises. The Duke feels that even in this new life he has not wholly avoided the old difficulty, for there still remains the struggle with the animal world — the burghers of the wood — for physical maintenance. Nay, there is one of these lords who cannot find here any solution of the trouble — who declares that injustice is as rife in the Forest of Arden as in society. Witness the slaughter of the innocent beasts of the field, and that same usurpation of their domains by the banished

Duke and lords, of which they themselves were the victims in society. This is Jaques, whose negative character can find repose nowhere; he even sees in Nature herself only discord and evil; the deer is as bad as man — it leaves its wounded neighbor to perish, while it passes haughtily on. Thus is our Idyllic World, from which we had thought to shut out all negation, disturbed by its reappearance, like a ghost among children. Indeed, man can hardly get rid of the negative element in this way; though he flee to the woods, he will find it there. In fact, his very existence depends upon destruction — upon swallowing a certain amount of vegetable and animal existence. Hence, in order to get rid of this negative, he must first get rid of life. Such is the logical result of abandoning State and Society with the design of seeking a solution of their contradiction, namely, suicide — a result which men seldom insist upon practically realizing, though it is not unknown in the history of the human species that this logic has been carried out to the bitter end.

If the Duke be the optimist, Jaques is the pessimist of the Forest of Arden; if the Duke find "good in everything," Jaques is sure to find the bad in everything; even here in the Duke's Paradise, he discovers an Inferno. The simple reason is because it is in him and he carries it along for his own punishment. He, too, has been one of

those who have fled from society; on what ground is not told; surely not for his devotion to the banished Duke, or for his love of idyllic life; we must think, not for his innocence, but for his guilt, inasmuch as we hear that in society he has been a "libertine as sensual as the brutish sting itself." Jaques, in his banishment, refuses to accept his discipline, the purgatorial training of the Forest of Arden, and so lapses into pessimistic hate which finds expression in a sort of universal blasphemy. He has no fortitude, no inner prop against the outer burden; his disposition is soured and melancholy; for the man who refuses to bear the trial of fortune, though it be fiery, and to draw from it the true lesson of patience, must become a misanthrope, hateful to man and to himself. Dante would have placed him among "the melancholy ones" whose sighs bubbled up through the black mire of the infernal pit.

Jaques is, accordingly, of that noble company the sole man who rejects the mediation of the Idyllic World; he satirizes it, smites it with his scorn, casts it away. The Forest of Arden, which is the fountain of healing for the sick and troubled soul, can bring to him no restoration; he will not accept it when freely offered.

> And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
> And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,

the end being the rot. Is not this his own

condition? He gives his survey of the whole passage of human life in the famous monologue called the Seven Ages of Man. The first is the infant "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;" that is all he sees in the baby of the household. In like manner he presents the negative phase of every period of life, till at last

> **Is second childishness and mere oblivion,**
> **Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.**

Assuredly a melancholy outcome, typical of the melancholy man. If there be a discord, Jaques will find it; if there be none, he will make it himself. All around him is a peace-bringing mediatorial world; though he dwells in it, it dwells not in him, he has destroyed it.

Jaques thus sneers at the old-comers, and their idyllic life; he bemocks their principle, their patience in adverse fortune. We are also to see him turn his ridicule upon the other set, the lovers, and their principle. He comes upon them in his rambles through the Forest at various times; but the fact is that he, the wit-cracker and professional satirist, is put down by the lovers, one after another; Rosalind, Orlando, even Touchstone, manifestly beat him at his own game. They indeed show that their love is a positive thing, and may sharpen the intellect into superiority over the scoffer. Love, then, in the Idyllic Realm, triumphs over Jaques, its keen-

tongued enemy. Yet we feel that in all his cynicism, there is a vein of affectation; he has assumed a part and is going to play it to the bitter end. In fact, it seems impossible that misanthropy should be altogether sincere; the man, in hating man, must hate himself as misanthrope and so at bottom, detest the principle which he follows.

2. These persons the play presupposes to have already gone to the Idyllic Realm, but now behold the new arrivals. First, Rosalind and Celia, in their disguise, appear at its entrance. Their difficulties, weariness, and hunger are specially noticed; they find the transition from the Real to the Ideal — from the luxury of the court and conveniences of society to the meager life of the shepherd — by no means easy. Though they are in an Ideal World, the Real makes itself very unpleasantly felt. But the nature of the place is soon made manifest. Two beings, called Corin and Silvius, suddenly rise upon their view, natives of the land, whose appearance shows them to be shepherds. Moreover, their language assumes a poetical form, and has for its theme the wail of unrequited love. Also, their names sound quite familiar — are, in fact, some old familiar names of pastoral poetry. With one of them Rosalind enters into conversation, and the result is that the new-comers buy a shepherd's hut, and are firmly planted in the idyllic land.

Strange to say, Orlando and his old, devoted servant, Adam, have arrived in another part of the same territory, a proceeding which seems at first somewhat arbitrary on the part of the Poet. Yet, whither else had they to go? They have fled society, and, hence, must proceed to a place where social order is unknown, which place has been identified as the Forest of Arden. We also find that they have the same difficulty, on entering this realm, which was experienced by the last party; Orlando even thinks of violence in order to obtain food, but he is soon changed by the gentle manner of the Duke, who, of course could not do harm to any human being. With the end of the Second Act we find everybody fairly established in the new country.

The next question which arises is: What are they to do here? What is to be the business of their lives? We are not long left in ignorance, for soon we find Orlando wholly occupied with love, carving the name of his fair one upon the bark of trees, making love-ditties and hanging them upon the bushes — in fine, consumed with the most intense passion. Nor is Rosalind much better off, though she preserves her disguise in his presence. Touchstone — the clown — too, becomes infected with the prevailing frenzy, and the native Shepherd Silvius, who is also heart-stricken, is again introduced, together with the disdainful shepherdess, Phebe, who, in her turn,

falls in love with the disguised Rosalind. The result of the Third Act is that we have three pairs of lovers, native and foreign, to whom one pair is added in the following Acts. Thus our Ideal Realm is, for the new-comers, transformed into a sort of love-land, where the young people seem wholly occupied with their passion, though the old-comers are not so affected, but are engaged in transmuting adversity into sweetness.

That such a state of existence should take this form is in the natural order of things. Let us analyze this remarkable transition. Man without society is without the substantial element of his life. Here society exists not, business is impossible, ambition in the State is cut off, the physical wants are reduced to the smallest compass and are satisfied with the smallest amount of exertion. Without occupation, without incentive—in general, without content to his life—man is reduced to the *natural individual*. Thus left alone to himself, his finitude begins to show itself in every direction; for man, single, is one-sided—a half—as is manifest by reflecting a moment on the sexual diremption. He is thus the half, yet would be the whole, and his entire nature drives him to overcome the contradiction; for, in truth, he is not himself; his existence is in and through another, namely, one of the opposite sex. Such is the feeling of love, for it is here not conscious, not in reflection, but the im-

pulse of the natural individual to cancel his own finitude. Now, we have just seen that this natural individuality is quite the sum of pastoral life, and, hence, its chief occupation is love. Thus the Poet is true to the character of this realm, when he makes those who dwell in it wholly employed with the tender passion.

But there is another consequence of this life, which the Poet has not neglected. We see here the origin and the purport of the idyl. Pastoral poetry, in its native simplicity, is mainly amatory, and allows but little reflection — which belongs to a more cultivated period. Moreover it is here that poetry begins, as the simplest expression of the primitive human passion. The Imagination gains absolute control and paints the loved one in the fairest colors; the stricken shepherd sees in the bush, in the flower, in the clouds, her fleeting form; all nature is turned into the image of her shape — love is his whole being. When man thus transmutes his existence into forms of the Imagination and gives them expression, the result is poetry. It does not seem a forced interpretation when it is said that Shakespeare meant to indicate the nature and the presence of the poetic element by the introduction of the native shepherds, Corin, Silvius, and Phebe. Their language falls at once into verse, their theme is some collision of love, and their names are taken from the pastoral poets. More-

over, Shakespeare has introduced perhaps the most common theme of this species of poetry — the neglected lover and the disdainful shepherdess; in fact, it occurs twice — Phebe disdains Silvius, and is herself disdained by Ganymede. Certainly, the greatest charm of pastoral poetry is this simple idyllic love, springing from nature direct, with the faintest shadow of social forms and conventionalities. Description of rural scenery and of pastoral manners is quite subordinate to the amatory element; but, when reflection enters, or allusions to a more complex social organization are brought in, the pastoral loses its native relish, without attaining the higher forms of poetry. This play is not, therefore, a pastoral drama in the sense of *Aminta* or *The Faithful Shepherdess*, both of which do not get beyond the shepherd's life, while here the pastoral element is merely a transitory phase of both poetic and social development.

Thus they all in this idyllic life reach Love, which is the bed-rock of social organization. Love is the essential discipline, the primal sacrifice of self, whereby society becomes possible. It is true that they have fled from society, but the comedy of the poem lies in the fact that they bring about just the opposite of what they intend. They are really going towards what they think they are leaving. By flight from family and society, they are not getting rid of them, but run-

ning back into them, actually creating them again.

Thus we see that not only the single characters, but the whole movement of the poem is comic, representing a phase of the comic world; it is self-annulling, is but an appearance which vanishes with its own fulfillment. And it is well that people do not succeed in such a plan, it would end them and the race. They are saved from their own design by a higher design; Providence lets them play, yet in beneficence overrules their scheme; through free-will they bring to pass the opposite of what they will. Providence, too, shows his hand in these comedies of Shakespeare; in them he is, indeed, the most colossal of all humorists, turning the caprices and foibles of the individual into a means of bringing forth the world's order.

III.

We have now reached the third movement, which shows the outcome of the drama in both its threads. It reveals the restoration, the return to institutional life, with which the break originally occurred. Not the individual alone has been cured by this trip to the Idyllic World; society also is healed of its wound, of that wrong which caused the first flight, being turned back to its very source in the love of man and woman, and ideally built up again from the beginning.

1. First, let us note what becomes of the lovers. Their complications, which rest wholly in the disguise of Rosalind, are solved by her appearance in woman's clothes; she is the mediatorial center of the drama, and, as a bride, brings all to a happy end in wedlock. Hymen can be now introduced as the divine magician who reconciles these collisions of love-land, and the result of the pastoral world is marriage, the Family, which again results directly in Society. So, viewed on this side, the Idyllic World cancels itself, and passes over into a system of social order. The four pairs, united in the presence of the rightful Duke, and quite representing the various classes of society, from the highest to the humblest, make already a little State, the head thereof being also present.

It is manifest that the supreme character of this whole realm is a woman — Rosalind. It is worth our while, now that we are about to part from her very agreeable company, to cast a glance back upon her career. The first trait which was brought to notice was her fortitude, her ability to buffet with ill fortune not only patiently, but mirthfully. A deeper worth as well as insight lay in her quick response of love when the son of her father's friend, the youth Orlando, appeared, whose sterling character she saw and admired, in spite of his rustic manner and neglected education. Then followed her disguise, in which she

had to overcome all her manifold obstacles. She easily escaped from her jealous uncle; but her task was to test the worth and fidelity of her lover. She must find out the man whom she loves; it is her right, nay, her duty. This she does without his knowing it; she gets from him, in simple-hearted honesty, the declaration of his affection; she makes him defend love even against herself. The skill of the woman in discovering the truth and devotion of the man she loves — that is Rosalind. To be sure, she employs artifice; but it is the woman's right to know beforehand her future husband. Her disguise she will throw off, and enter the Family, which has been her end from the beginning.

Still another trait must be added to round out her character, and make her the mediatorial person of the play. She has solved her own problem, now she must solve the problem of others who are unequal to it. In this Idyllic Land she hears a single dissonance, the unrequited love of the shepherd Silvius; she must remove the obstacle and unite the pair. Her disguise is again the means of bringing harmony out of discord; what she has done for herself she must do for others, thus she makes her own life truly universal. This is the deep serious kernel of her character, but around it is spun such a net-work of wit, fancy, even whimsicality, that we are in danger of losing sight of her inner earnestness. It gives

to Rosalind's portrait a peculiar bright color — this everlasting bubbling over of humor, artifice and fantastic adventure. Hereafter, with the deepening years, the Poet will gradually strip off this sportive drapery from his mediatorial female characters, and reveal to direct vision their ethical nature; from Rosalind he will pass to Hermione. Shakespeare, in his comedies, is very fond of making women the chief mediators through their tact, their intrigue, their disguises, external and internal, as well as through their instinctive devotion to their institutional principle, the Family, in all their concealments. In a mediated drama, as is the comedy, the chief character must be the mediator; such is Rosalind in the present play; its three movements are welded together by her love, which harmonizes all, and really brings about the return to society. Love is the healing fountain of that Idyllic Realm, and Rosalind's love is the main current thereof, into which the others are drawn and carried along. She attunes all her companions to her key-note; Celia, her true friend and follower, is already prepared when a lover appears; Touchstone, the clown, whose function it is to laugh at the tender passion, is caught while in the act of fleering; Phebe, the disdainful one, is forced to accept her faithful swain. Thus all these diverse notes are brought at last to make one music.

We often acquire a perverted notion of Rosa-

lind's character from the stage. Actresses are sorely tempted to give only her witty, coquettish, bantering side ; but she has a deep, serious, ethical nature, which should be made to shine through all her sportiveness in a representation. She always claims to be a true woman in spite of her disguise: "Dost thou think I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?"

2. But the banished Duke and lords cannot thus return out of their idyllic existence, for it is supposed that they are too old for passion, or have previously entered the family relation. It is the State which has driven them off, and through the State they must be brought back. So the Poet introduces a new — and, of course, the true — motive for their return. The world of wrong, of which the usurping Duke is the representative, must continue its assaults upon the individual, since it is based upon the destruction of personal right. The result must be that soon a majority — or, if injustice be carried to its extreme logical end, all — of the people will be driven off to the Forest of Arden, where the rightful Duke resides. In such case the Idyllic Realm is at once converted into the same State from which they have fled, lacking only the soil and the usurping Duke. But the return must be complete — must be to the old territory. Hence the usurper is made to repent when he sees that he is deserted, and the old ruler and his attendant lords are re-

stored *peacefully* — an important point, for it would ill comport with their peaceful character, and their simple, unoffending life in the woods, to come back by violence. Thus the reconciliation is complete; harmony is restored; the world of wrong dissolves of its own accord, the world of right returns with the rightful Duke. The disruption with which the play begins is now healed over, the Ideal World being the means whereby the regeneration takes place.

It will be noticed, however, that there is one of the company who does not return. Jaques is the completely negative character, who believes in society as little as in anything else. Even the Forest of Arden called forth in him only sneers; it was as bad as the court and possessed the same unjust features; hence it had no mediation for him. He finds a fool in the forest, whose nonsensical moralizing calls forth in him the wildest delight; he thinks the fool is the only wise man, and he himself wants to turn fool to reform the world. Here we have a sample of not a few of our modern reformers, who, of all people, are themselves most in need of reform. He snarls at all reality, apparently for no other reason than that it is; the moment anything becomes actual it becomes bad; mere existence is sufficient for condemnation. It does not surprise us, therefore, when it is hinted that this reformer has himself waded through the depths of sensuality, and

traveled over the whole world in search of something positive, which, of course, he cannot find. He is, hence, wholly negative; man and even nature are to him worthless. He does not return, therefore, with the rest, but goes to the new convert, the Duke's brother, who has now "left the world" in his turn, but whose career in the world was also negative. Jaques is one of those psychological characterizations of Shakespeare which are true to the most rigid logic, yet are so completely vitalized that we never feel the abstraction. Such is the third movement of the play.

To sum up, this drama gives a poetic statement and solution of the problem of the Real and Ideal. First comes the struggle of the individual with the actual world, whereby he is trampled into the dust, his rights taken away, his life endangered. It becomes the Real World of Wrong, and destroys that which it was called into existence to protect, and thus has the contradiction within itself which must bring about its destruction. Secondly, the individual, therefore, must flee; abandon State and Society, which oppress and try to destroy him, and go —whither? Not to another State, for the thought in its universality is that the State as such assails him; hence he must find some spot quite out of its reach. The simple primitive life must, therefore, be sought; he has to betake himself to the woods — the Forest of Arden — where only a few scattered

shepherds eke out a scanty existence. Thus the individual is established in his Ideal Realm, far away from institutions, from the conventional usages and the struggles of society, in simple unity with nature and the beasts of the field. But, in the third place, this mode of life is found to be of very short duration — is, hence, not a true and permanent condition of the human race. There arises simultaneously a twofold movement for its dissolution. On the one hand, the members of this ideal land are still natural individuals — hence must love, and, what is more, must marry; thus the Family appears, which again in good time brings forth the State, and the Ideal Realm vanishes into thin air. On the other hand, the Real World of Wrong continues its warfare with the individual until it drives all away into the Forest of Arden; for its principle is the destruction of the individual, who has, of course, to flee. The ideal land thereby is converted into the old State minus the tyrant, since the citizens of the one have become inhabitants of the other. So, by a double process, this realm cancels itself and passes into the higher form of civil and social organization. The Poet, therefore, indicates that such an idyllic life is an irrational abstraction; that man's rational existence is in the State and in Society, whose collisions he must endure, bitter though they be. The absurd notion that a pastoral, dreamy existence is the highest finds

here no toleration — is, in fact, reduced to a comedy, which shows it dissolving in its own absurdity.

Such is the lesson for life; but the Poet's work cuts wider, since it includes the literary and artistic products of the same consciousness. All those ideal commonwealths of which literature is full may here obtain their final judgment. But particularly the nature, extent, and limits of pastoral poetry — the art-form of such a life — are brought out with a hey-dey of laughter. For this species of poetry also must end with the entrance into society; it belongs only to the simple shepherd on his native hills; it is the first and least concrete — and, hence, least interesting — of all poetry, being without the presupposition of society. The course of the drama, therefore, is the contradiction in the world of reality which results in the wrongs done to the individual; the mediation is through the Ideal World, whereby a reconciliation is brought about and the individual is restored to the world of reality. The three steps may be generalized as the Separation, the Mediation and the Return. They exhibit a totality of society, with its corresponding Art and a hint of its Literature.

Some have considered this play to be a mere caprice — a wild and irregular sport of fancy. But, if we have succeeded in our interpretation, we have shown it to be an inherent and neces-

sary development out of one fundamental thought. Again, it has been taken for a pastoral drama. But its very aim, its comic germ, is to show the limits of pastoral poetry — in fact, of idyllic life generally — and consequently, of the poetic form which springs from such a life. Still more frequently it is held to be an ordinary comedy of situation, of intrigue and love, as if the incidents connected with the disguise of Rosalind were alone to be considered. It has, undoubtedly, a pastoral element — it has also intrigue; but both are subordinate — are only means to bring forth the grand result. It is thus a comedy within a comedy, or, rather, two comedies within a comedy. The pursuit of an idyllic life calls forth the pastoral, the love gives the basis of the intrigue. But the third and highest comic element is to be found in the return to society; in the fact that these people of the Ideal Realm are, in reality, doing just the opposite of what they think they are doing — they are trying to accomplish ends which are in themselves contradictory and null. In general, this play may be called the comedy of the Phantasy, as against the Reason, or of the abstract Ideal as against the Actual, wherein the Phantasy in pursuing an object is at the same time destroying it. Its content thus reaches deep into the history of the world. All visionary commonwealths — Plato's

Republic, More's Utopia, Harrington's Oceana, Arcadias, Icarias, Atlantises, etc.; also, many of the so-called ideal lives, paradisaical societies — in fine, the whole consciousness upon which such bodiless creations of fancy repose — constitute the theme of this drama, and are exhibited in their finitude.

Such is, we are forced to think, the soul of the play stripped of its dramatic vesture. But, we ask in astonishment, did the Poet intend to put into his light-hearted comedy all this meaning, which touches so profoundly the spirit of the ages? It is hard to say what he intended to do, except by looking at what he really did; the drama itself is his final utterance. The true poet, writing out of his own heart, writes out of the heart of his time; what his epoch says, he says, both have the same meaning at bottom; it gives him also his materials, and suggests usually their form. Let us see, then, if we can trace, in part at least, what Time gave to Shakespeare out of which to build the present drama. We know the source from which he drew; it was a pastoral romance by Thomas Lodge, printed in 1590, and called *Rosalynd, Euphues' Golden Legacie*, a book much read in those Shakespearian days, as we infer from its repeated editions. It is written with a certain richness in its pointed and figurative style, it often has the full overflow and extravagance of Elizabethan fancy, yet it is, for

the most part, stilted and artificial, and needs to be broken to nature. Still, even in style, the novel has a degree of kinship, not to be ignored, with the drama. Chiefly, however, the poet took thence his materials — structure, incidents, personages — but he transfigured them into poetry.

In the first place, Shakespeare found the structural principle of his play in Lodge's book, which has also the three movements above indicated — the Flight, the Pastoral World, and the Return. Even the groupings of the characters, and the lines on which they move — the threads, as we have called them — are essentially the same in both the novel and the drama. Yet, this organism belongs not to Lodge primarily; it is more or less distinctly suggested in other pastoral books. In fact, it is immanent in this species of poetry; even ancient Theocritus implies the flight from civilization to the idyllic world which he describes, and he has many glances back to urban life. The structure, then, was given to Shakespeare, not by Lodge merely, but by Literature itself; but the Poet has unfolded it out of its crude beginnings, has purified it of many excrescences, and has deepened it to its true purpose in being the bearer which upholds a whole cycle of human experience.

In the second place, the incidents, or what is usually called the story or plot, are pretty much the same in the novel and in the drama. To be

sure, there are some omissions, some additions, and some translocations. But the marvel is that the incident, keeping its outer form, undergoes an internal change, is filled with a new soul. The external shell of the occurrence remains the same, so that to the superficial eye it seems quite what it was before, but really it holds another world. This is the Poet's miracle; into the old legend, event, deed, he pours the spirit's meaning deepest and best. In his drama we note that he binds the action more closely together, he brings out the thought more clearly, but above all, the ethical soul of the incident and the deed he makes shine through its outer cover, till that, though the story of the fact remains the same, the fact itself is transfigured. How does he do it? By a pen-stroke; a relationship is introduced, a fresh motive is added, and the whole begins to be metamorphosed. In the drama the rightful and the wrongful Dukes are brothers; not so in the novel, as far as I can discover; that is, then, a turn given by the Poet. Yet, how it intensifies the ethical significance of the entire play, and, indeed, brings the action into a closer unity! Then the return of the banished Duke in the novel is by violence, whereas in the drama there is no external force employed, but the restoration is wholly internal. The spiritual mediation is thereby made the main thing. Slight points of artistic procedure we may notice; thus,

Shakespeare localizes the Forest of Arden alone, while Lodge tells us that Paris is the seat of the court, and Bordeaux the home of Orlando. In the poet the flight takes place from everywhere, is as universal as society.

In the third place, the characters are, for the most part, the same in both works, and a number of them bear the same names in both works. But the characters of the novel, compared to those of the drama, are mere outlines, talking figures; still in the outlines of Lodge we discern the external features of the deepened and transfigured personages of Shakespeare. It is the same alchemy which we noticed in the case of structure and incident; the bodily face, without losing its lines, is transmuted into its spiritual counterpart; the outer lineaments remain, yet are elevated to their true meaning by being made to reflect the soul of the man. For instance, Rosalind, in the novelist as well as in the Poet, is full of adventure, caprice and fancy, assumes the disguise, falls in love, helps the poor shepherd win his refractory maiden. Still, in Shakespeare alone, these external qualities become radiant with her deep, ethical nature, and she reaches her true, mediatorial character only in the drama. The same is true of Orlando; in Lodge, he is not only muscular and a wrestler, but a ruffian and reveller; in Shakespeare, he is also muscular and a wrestler, but just these physical traits are used

to bring out his inner worth and to lift him into a higher being. On the other hand, these characters, while they are spiritualized in the best sense, are endowed with a more vivid realism. In Shakespeare the ideal and the real are not two warring factions, but are one whole truth, and help each other.

The Poet has added four characters not found in the novelist, important in themselves, and very necessary to the completeness of the drama. There are, in the first place, the two men of ridicule, Jaques and Touchstone, satirist and clown, who show the reverse side of the idyllic life in scoff and jest. Then there are two other very realistic, but very humble figures — Audrey and William — who show the low, prosaic element of the pastoral world, and who talk in prose while the other shepherds talk in verse. So the idyllic realm has its two sides also. In such manner the poet rounds out the novel, with its other half, with its own negative phase. In his all-dissolving humor, he makes everything reveal its limit, be it character, society, institutions; his own poetical world must also reflect the opposite of itself. There is, however, a character in the novel, which, one thinks, might have been more fully developed in the drama; this is "the second son of old Sir Rowland," whom Lodge names "Fernandyne, thy middle brother, he is a scholler, and hath no minde but on Aristotle."

In his case, we might behold the conflict between love and learning in the flight to the idyllic land, but Shakespeare had already treated this theme in his *Love's Labor's Lost.* Moreover, the drama is continually brought to the surface by the novel, which has a tendency to drop into monologue and dialogue; these, indeed, become a little wearisome, but seem to be calling aloud to the dramatist to come and free them into a natural and untrammelled action. In general, Lodge has furnished the raw materials, and has often suggested the tone and style, as well as hinted the dramatic form.

But the legendary portion of "*As You Like It*," can be traced, long before the time of Lodge, to the "*Coke's Tale of Gamelyn*," erroneously attributed to Chaucer by some of his editors. It is a crude, barbarous story, yet with a rugged sense of right; it portrays the physically strong man defending himself against the injustice of those in authority. Gamelyn is, as in the novel and drama, the youngest brother of three, who is wronged by his oldest brother, contrary to the provisions of the father's last will and testament. After winning a victory in a wrestling match, he goes home and resents his ill treatment, but is artfully entrapped by his brother and put in fetters, from which he is freed by his servant, Adam. Then the sheriff comes with his people to arrest Gamelyn, whereupon

the latter has to flee with Adam to the woods, as Orlando and Adam did in the drama. There he finds a large company at table under the trees; they are outlaws, but they receive the new comer hospitably. After sojourning a while in the forest, Gamelyn is made captain of the outlaws. At last he returns to his old home, and with the help of his band he hangs judge, jury and sheriff, of whom the last is his wicked brother. Then Gamelyn was reconciled to the king, was pardoned along with his outlaws, and became himself supreme judge.

Here, again, we notice the rude sketch of the drama, in its threefold movement. There is the wrong of institutions, and this wrong, in one sense, is more complete in the tale than either in Lodge or Shakspeare. For the Church is included, as well as Family and State; the abbot, the monk, the canon, participate in the injury done to the wronged son; they have no sympathy, no protection for him. So "the holy men of the Church," come in for a share of the penalty in this old story. It portrays the institutional wrong corrected by violence through outlaws, wherein it touches Robin Hood. How Shakespeare has softened these features and brought about the return, not by external force, but by an internal transformation of both society and the wrong-doers, has already been told. The evil flowing from the right of primogeniture is the

social ground-work of the story. Still this is but the half, though it be the skeleton. In *Gamelyn* there is no love, no Rosalind, it is a tale of wrong, of rude muscular energy, and fierce revenges — but no love — only at the end we hear that Gamelyn married a good and handsome wife. Out of this little fact Rosalind is to grow and become the true mediating principle of all these violent energies. She will first appear in Lodge's novel.

Still further back the mythical element of "*As You Like It*," might be traced. Many of those Teutonic tales, collected by Grimm, have the same flight to a wood, which is a marvelous world, and a return out of it. So far down, indeed, does this drama reach into the folk-lore of the race. What the Poet's ancient Aryan ancestors told by their hearths as they were emerging from a forest life into an institutional life, with the conflict between the two still deep in them, he takes as the bed-rock of his dramatic form, and so is giving back to his people anew what is already in them of old. There is also a touch of the medieval romances of chivalry, the wicked eldest brother is called the false knight in *Gamelyn*. In the drama the adventure with snake and the lion is a survival of that romantic symbolism, which finds its supreme poetic transfiguration in a contemporary of Shakespeare, namely, Edmund Spenser.

Did Shakespeare use this "*Tale of Gamelyn*" as one of the sources of his play? It is indeed hard to say, and the critics are divided upon the point. In Shakespeare's time that story is not known to have been printed, it lay buried in the Chaucerian manuscripts of private libraries or at the Universities. Still there are a surprising number of incidents common to the drama and the tale, which are not found in the novel. There have been two ways of accounting for this fact: the first is that Shakespeare had read the tale; or, secondly, that he had not read it but the changes from Lodge were suggested by his artistic sense. There is, however, a third and more natural way, he may have known the main facts of the story from tradition. It evidently was a part of the fire-side literature of England, with which the Poet was more deeply acquainted than he was with books. It belonged to the mythical current coming down through the hearts of the people, in which he was bathed from youth upwards. No doubt he knew Lodge's novel, but he knew also its origin, and he drew from the first sources.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

It has been hitherto impossible to ascertain the date of this play. It was printed first in 1600; but it is mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, a book which belongs to the year 1598. This gives the limit of time in one direction; the other limit will be carried back to 1590, if the play was written in honor of the marriage between the Earl of Essex and Lady Sidney, which is doubtful. Thus, however, we have eight years, more or less, for conjecture to play in, and almost every year has been occupied by some critic. If we look at the internal evidence, which is often but another name for caprice or ignorance, we shall find nothing to fix the date. We shall, therefore, offer the reader a compromise, after the pattern of the wise man Solomon of old, as the best thing at present to be done: let us halve the disputed period, and throw one part of four years into oblivion, then add the other part to the year 1590, which will give us 1594, a fair working date for our drama.

The play has been thought to be full of allegory, historical and moral. The story of Essex, of

Southampton, of Leicester, in their love affairs, has been read into it; but these historical allegories, though very ingenious, and surprisingly fitting in places, on the whole persist in remaining outside of any genuine conviction. We may grant that Queen Elizabeth receives a side glance from the Poet, when he speaks of the "fair vestal throned by the west;" we may also well believe that he often had in mind persons and occurrences of his own time when writing his dramas. But the very function of poetry is to transmute the particular historic event into a new form which reveals what is universal, while allegory simply substitutes one particular thing for another, whereby nothing is gained in meaning or clearness. That is, the Poet does not allegorize, he mythologizes; history disappears in fable, which, as Aristotle states, is truer than history. Still further, the play tempts to moral allegory, to some adjustment of the virtues and vices. But such a view is too narrow for the work, which must be seen to rest upon the institutional world, like all of Shakespeare's dramas, whose deepest movement is that of society, nay, of civilization itself.

On the stage it is doubtful whether this play can be truly successful; it transcends the limits of the theater; Puck, the Fairies, and the whole action of Fairy-land can appear before the Imagination alone, which is, in the present case,

its own spectator. Like *The Tempest*, it leaps the bounds of the visible drama, and enters the world of wonders, which are beheld only with the inner eye. Its theatrical history is curious; it has been trimmed up and even cut up into farce, opera, spectacle; but it will not let itself be played in its native form without avenging the wrong. It manifestly does not hold its last allegiance to the stage; in this case, as in many others, the dramatist vanishes in the poet; the professional limit is pushed beyond itself into the unbounded realm of Imagination. Consciously or unconsciously the author is appealing from that confined theater of spectators to his future constituency, the untold millions of readers.

And to his readers, *Midsummer Night's Dream* is, perhaps, the most popular of Shakespeare's comedies. Its weird, ethereal scenery captivates the purely poetical nature; its striking sensuous effects impress the most ordinary mind; while its faint rainbow-like outlines of the profoundest truths entice the thinker with an irresistible charm to explore the hidden meaning of the Poet. There is no work of our author that is so universal — that appeals so strongly to high and low, to old and young, to man and woman. Its shadowy forms appear, disappear, and reappear in the wildest sport, and the critic may sometimes doubt his ability to track them through all

their mazy hues. Nor can it be denied that there is a capricious play of fancy over and around the underlying elements of the drama. Still, like all of Shakespeare's pieces, it is based on thought, and must look to the same for its justification. Our attempt, therefore, will be to seize and fix these fleeting, iridescent shapes in the abstract forms of thought. To be sure, the poetry of the play is thus held in abeyance for the time; criticism, however, is not poetry, but prose. For, if criticism were poetry, it had better keep silent in the presence of this piece, and not vainly attempt to imitate that which is inimitable, or say over again that which the Poet has already so adequately said. The only justification of the critic, therefore, is that he expresses the content of this drama in a new form — the form of thought — for his reader, instead of the imaginative form, which the dramatist has chosen, and, in fact, must choose.

We are well aware that not a few people will regard any attempt to make out a consistent unity in the present play as wanton and absurd refinement. Moreover, the great interpreters of Shakespeare will be pointed to, who call it a caprice — a dream without any necessary connection of its various parts. That is, the work is a chaos. But every person who reads this play with admiration must grant that there is a profound harmony pervading it throughout; that he

feels all its essential parts to be in perfect unison with one another; that the effect of the whole is not that of a discordant and ill-assorted poem. Thus, however, the notion of caprice, or of a dream, must be abandoned as the fundamental idea of the work. Both these elements undoubtedly are present; there is a capricious ingredient in certain parts, and the Fairy World is likened to the dream-world; but they are only subordinate members in the organization of the whole. If, then, it must be granted that there is a deep, underlying harmony throughout the entire piece, it must further be granted that the attempt to ascertain and state the law of such harmony is not only reasonable, but necessary.

The procedure of this essay, as usual, will be twofold. First, it will attempt to state the phases or movements of the entire action, and their transition into one another; second, it will seek to trace the various threads which run through each movement of the play. The former divides the total action of the drama into a certain number of parts; the latter unites the characters together into groups. This will give a complete view of the structure of the work, which must be the foundation for all future conclusions.

But, after such preparatory labor of method, the chief part of the expositor's work remains to be done. All the above-mentioned stages must be explained for thought; the transitions must be

shown to be logically necessary; the different characters, if important, but particularly the different groups of characters, must be elucidated in their unity — in their fundamental idea. In other words, the language of imagination, which is that of the poet, must be translated into the language of thought, which is that of the expositor.

Following the principles above laid down, we are now ready for the statement of the various phases or movements, which, however, must finally be grasped together into the one complete movement of the play. These are three: First, the Real World, which is embraced in the First Act, and which is called real because its mediations and its collisions are those of common experience, and are based upon the institutions of human Reason; second, the Fairy World, the Ideal Realm, which terminates in the course of the Fourth Act, so named because its mediations and collisions are brought about through the agency of supernatural beings — the creatures of the Imagination; third, the representation in Art, which, together with the return from Fairy-land to the world of reality, takes up the rest of the drama, except the final scene. In this last part, then, the first two parts mirror themselves — the action reflects itself, the play plays itself playing; it is its own spectator, including its audience and itself in one and the same movement. Thus

there is reached a totality of Representation, which represents, not only something else besides itself, but represents itself in the act of Representation. The very limits of Dramatic Art are touched here; it can go no further. In this reflection of the play by itself — the play playing itself in the play — is to be found the thought which binds together its multifarious, and seemingly irreconcilable, elements.

The reader will notice that there is very little portraiture of character in this drama. The sketches of persons are true, but light and superficial; there is no profound and intricate psychological painting, such as is to be found in other of Shakespeare's works. This is, therefore, in no sense a character-drama, and the criticism which proceeds from such a point of view will assuredly fall short of the true conception of the whole. No doubt there is some characterization; there must be in a drama, but it is not the principal element. The chief interest is centered in the groups, in the transitions, in the different phases which are above called worlds, as the Real World, the Fairy World, and their Representation. We shall, therefore, indulge very sparingly in character-analysis, believing it to be quite out of place here. Our object will be to unfold and connect these various movements and threads organically, and unite them into one central thought. For the work of the Poet moves in

images — in individual forms which are apparently independent; but thought must unify all these distinct elements, and in this way must free itself from the pictures of the imagination by exhibiting the underlying ground of their order and connection.

I.

The first movement, accordingly, unfolds a picture of the Real World in a special phase of both harmony and conflict. The scene is carried back to ancient Athens, a realm of order, law and beauty, and is portrayed upon a mythical, heroic background. But this antique setting seems to vanish under our glance, as we catch the inner life of the work; love, romantic love, wells out of the heart everywhere, and we see that the Poet, full of the soul of the Reaascence, simply fills the classic form with the modern spirit. Three different strands of the Real World he weaves together into his drama, which has thus three threads. These we shall separately consider.

1. The first thread is the part of Theseus and Hippolyta, whose mutual love and concord hover over the play from beginning to end — the beautiful arch which spans the entire action. In them is no jar, no collision; the unity is perfect from the start and remains undisturbed to the

last; the longing of both for the nuptial hour is the key-note struck in the first lines of the drama. They are thus the types as well as the producers of that harmony in which all the difficulties of the lovers must terminate, and in which all the complications of the play must be solved. Theseus is a true antique hero, defender and establisher of right and civil order against violence; but he has had to be violent himself against the violent, and there still remains a little harshness from his heroic conflicts with a refractory world. He has wooed Hippolyta with his sword, "and won thy love doing thee injuries," though he will wed her "in another key;" he is still not yet wholly subdued to love, as we shall soon see by his decision, in which harsh law seeks to crush rudely the tender passion.

Such is Theseus in the Family, or his beginning therein, but his essential function is that he is the head of the State. He therefore represents the highest rational institutions of man — he is both judge and ruler; through him the Real World is seen to be controlled by an organized system of law and justice — such is the atmosphere which surrounds him everywhere. Hence he stands above the rest and commands them, but does not himself become involved in their collisions. At first he sides with Egeus and asserts absolute submission to parental authority, but in the end he alters his mind and commands

the daughter to be united to her chosen lover. The grounds for this change of judgment are carefully elaborated by the Poet, and, indeed, the movement from strife to harmony lies just between the two decisions of Theseus.

2. Next comes the second thread—Egeus and the group of lovers. Here, now, the negative element, discord, is introduced, and the contrast to the preceding pair is manifest. Egeus comes before the Duke Theseus with his refractory daughter, who insists on marrying the one whom she loves, without regarding the selection of her father. Thus it is the old collision, involving the right of choice on the part of the child against the will of the parent. It is a theme which Shakespeare has often handled, and for which he seems to have a particular delight. But this is not the only difficulty which arises. There begins also a complicated love-collision, by which is meant the struggle which takes place when individuals of either sex find out that their love is unrequited by its object. Here two such cases are portrayed — Helena loves and is repelled by Demetrius, Demetrius loves and is repelled by Hermia — the reciprocal love being between Lysander and Hermia, which, however, has to endure the conflict with the will of the parent. Yet even this sole harmony will hereafter be destroyed for a time in Fairy-land. Such are the

collisions from which the action starts, and which must be solved by the play.

The law at Athens demands the most implicit submission to parental authority, under the severest penalties, and the Duke will abate none of its rigors. The harshness of Egeus, the father, and the decision of Theseus, the ruler, force the lovers to flee from their home and their city — from Family and State. But whither are they to go? It is just at this point that we must seek for the basis of their transition to a new order of things. We hope the reader will observe carefully the nature and necessity of this transition, for here lies the distinctive characteristic of the play. It must be borne in mind that the lovers do not run away from the world of organized wrong; on the contrary, it is the authority of the parent and of the law — certainly a valid authority — from which they are fleeing. Hence they abandon the world of institutions, in which alone man can enjoy a free and rational existence, and they go to the opposite, for it is just these institutions and the law which have become insupportable to them. They cannot enter another State, for it is the State as such with which they have fallen out, and hence, the same collision must arise. Thus the nature of their place of refuge must be determined by what they reject. The next locality in which we find them is

a new and strange world, called by the Poet a "Wood near Athens."

The similarity at this point to the idyllic group of mediated dramas, and particularly to *As You Like It*, becomes apparent. In the latter play there was also a flight from society and an entrance into a wood — the Forest of Arden. But mark the distinction; that was a flight from the World of Wrong — society was without justice — while in the drama before us it is the flight from the supremacy of law and just authority — in general from the World of Right. Hence, in *As You Like It*, those who flee must begin to build up society from its foundation; they must commence with the primitive pastoral existence, which develops into society. Such was the course of that drama. But here there can be no such movement, for society in its just and rightful form is already present, and the flight is from it.

On their entrance into the wood the lovers must, therefore, leave behind them the realized world of Reason — the State, the Family, and the other institutions of society. Now, the object of all these institutions is to secure freedom to man, and to shield him from external accident. By them he is protected against incursions of enemies from abroad, against injustice at home, against every species of rude violence; through civil institutions brute force is shut out, as it

were, by mountain-bulwarks. Man is only in this way secure of his freedom, and can enjoy his existence as a self-determined being. For in the State all action is determined ultimately through Reason, in the form of laws and institutions — in other words is determined through man himself; thus it is his true abode, in which he sees everywhere the work of his own Intelligence, and whose operations are, therefore, perfectly clear to his mind, and seem not the work of some dark, extraneous power. It is Theseus who represents such a world in the drama before us.

Still it must be granted that the Athenian law is not perfect, it is harsh and harshly administered. Nay, it is at bottom self-contradictory, it crushes the internal basis of the Family, which it ought to protect; the law enforced to the last letter becomes wrong. Love and institutions thus collide — a collision which must be gotten rid of; love flees to a place where it has no restraint, and loses its rational or institutional element; thus it is mere caprice or passion. This is bad for the lovers, but it is also bad for the State, which must be corrected; it should not drive off love by its fierce legality, but give it a true validity, by recognizing it as the emotional element of the Family — which may be called the Right of Love. So the law and Theseus must change, just as the ancient world with its legal

severity toward the Family changes into the modern world which recognizes this Right of Love. Theseus, between his two decisions, steps out of hoar antiquity into the recent centuries, and becomes one of the Poet's fellow-lovers. Still this Athenian world is the established World of Right, in which man lives free, in the edifice built of his own spirit.'

The fleeing lovers, accordingly, enter a place where all these spiritual mediations of Intelligence no longer exist, but they are brought into direct contact with the forces of Nature, which determine them from without. Such a place is, hence, represented by the Poet as a wood, dark and wild, a pure product of Nature, inhabited by a race of beings foreign to man and unknown in the world of Reason. The lovers are, therefore, at once exposed to all sorts of external influences. They have now no State above them whose action is their own highest rational principle — hence clear to their minds; but the world which is at work is beyond them, outside of their Intelligence — the world of Nature, of Accident, of Externality. Now, it was seen to be the great function of the State to subordinate these elements hostile to freedom, and to protect man against them; but, when the former is wiped out, or has been abandoned, the latter must have full sway. Therefore the one fundamental property of the "Wood near Athens"

must be that it exhibits a world of unfreedom — of external determination.

But how is such a world to be represented by the Poet? Here, too, there need be no doubt, for an adequate statement of this phase of consciousness has frequently been given in the course of human history. In certain stages of culture man's profoundest convictions repose on a system of external determination; it is his deepest belief that he is the sport and the victim of extraneous powers, and consequently he must elaborate a corresponding expression of his faith. While he has not yet freed himself from the trammels of Nature by means of institutions and thought, what else can he do but portray himself as he really is? Such is the character of all mythologies. The activities of Nature, and of men in relation to the same, are conceived to take place by the instrumentality of supernatural agencies; the most common phenomena have behind them the demon, angel, fairy, god, as producing cause. Man is not seized in his freedom, nor is Nature subjected to law, but all their operations are performed by a power superior to both. Mythology is, therefore, the adequate expression of this world of external determination.

The mythopœic epoch of nations, we may be certain, will furnish the Poet numerous examples for his purpose. Which of the many Mytholo-

gies will he take? Evidently the one which has been elaborated by the nation which he is addressing. It is known as an historical fact that the belief in fairies was common, at the time of the writing of the play, throughout England. To this consciousness already existent the Poet appeals, and at the same time portrays it to itself.

But there are two more characteristics which follow from this one fundamental principle. In the first place, the Fairy World is not the product of Reason, which is here the State, and has been left behind, but of the Imagination, which objectifies the processes of Nature and Spirit in the form of images and external activities. It projects some personality behind every kind of action or appearance. Hence, when it takes complete possession of the mind, all occurrences are transferred to the realm of the Supernatural. But the content of the Imagination is, nevertheless, the genuine expression of the consciousness of a nation — its statement and solution of the profoundest problems of existence. But, in the second place, this is also the world of poetry, since everything is transfused into images and external influences; the prose of real life, with its means and ends, its wants and utilities, is banished — man seems to live in a perpetual dream. The abstract Understanding, with its categories of cause and effect, laws of Nature, etc., has no validity here; all is pictured — ab-

stract terms are quite unknown. Whole nations, like the ancient Hindoos, seem to have lived in this dreamy, sensuous state. The Fairy World is a phase of this consciousness, and, accordingly, the ethereal poetic existences which flit through it are not merely the capricious products of the Poet's fancy, but strictly necessary.

These are the essential qualities, with which the Poet has endowed his "Wood near Athens," bring derived from the lovers' conflict with institutions. It is a world of external determination, and is pictured in a Mythology, which is a product of the Imagination, and thus such a world resembles dream-land, where all rushes in without cause, a fact which doubtless gives name to the play. It is also the realm of inner caprice, as the individual has no longer any institutional fixity; moreover it is an imaginative, poetic realm, as distinguished from the prosaic life in society. This brings us to the contrast between poetry and prose, which is now to be treated.

3. This is the third thread which shows the learning and representation of the theatrical piece by the clowns. The motive thereto is given on the first page of the play, in an external manner, by Theseus calling upon his Master of Revels to stir up the Athenian youth to merriments—to produce something for the entertainment of the court—that is, a demand for Art has arisen. For man's highest want is, after all, to know

himself; he desires to behold his own countenance, as it were, in a mirror, which Art holds up before him. Moreover, there is an official attached to the court, and generally to all courts, whose duty it is to provide for the above-mentioned want.

The theme will, therefore, be that which gives a picture of the court — of its chief thought and business at this time, which is love. The content of the drama of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is thus a love-collision. Moreover it is a myth, and can only be learned by going to the mythical world, which is here Fairy-land. Now to compose and exhibit such a work adequately demands the highest skill, both in poet and actor. They must be gifted by nature with true artistic conception; they must polish nature by culture; Art must be their life and living; they must be professional. Such at least is the general rule; dilettanteism beyond the private circle is intolerable, and never was it more happily ridiculed than just in these clowns. Shakespeare has, therefore, chosen to give not a poetic, ideal picture in this part, but a prosaic one; and necessarily so, for what would the second picture otherwise have been but a repetition of the first? In fact, this play of the clowns is the contrast to his own true play; he has exhibited thus in the one and the same totality the negative — that is, humorous — side of his own work.

The idea of the third thread now before us may, therefore, be given in the statement—Prose is trying to be Poetry. The result is a burlesque of the legitimate kind, for it is not Poetry, or any other high and holy thing, which is wantonly caricatured, but the prosaic conception of Poetry. The contradiction is real—inherent; the Prosaic attempts to be what it is not and can never be—the Poetic; its efforts to put on such ethereal robes are simply ludicrous; but we have also the True alongside of the Burlesque; genuine Poetry is to be found just here in the same piece. Thus the Poet does not leave us with a negative result; after his wit has ceased to sparkle there is not left merely a handful of ashes, but the positive side is present also.

In this connection another distinction must be noticed which the Poet has carefully elaborated. It is not the cultivated, refined, prosaic Understanding which is here represented; that will be shown hereafter, and has quite a different manifestation. But it is the dull, uneducated, prosaic consciousness of low life, of mechanical employments, with a feeling for only the most gross, sensuous effects, without even cultivated taste, not to speak of artistic conception. The lowest form of prosaic life thus proposes to undertake to represent the very highest form of the highest art, namely, Dramatic Poetry; hence the clowns, too, must go to the poetic Fairy-land—

the mystic wood of the imagination. Also their subject is mythical, so they have to set out for the myth-world.

Such are the three threads of the First Act. Their unity lies in the common theme love, in three of its manifestations; the love-harmony in Theseus and Hippolyta, the love-conflict in Egeus and the lovers, the burlesque of the love-conflict in the rude mechanicals. Taken together, they show the Real World, which now suddenly is left behind, and we are ushered into the Ideal Realm.

II.

Here begins the second grand movement of the play, which is marked in the most emphatic manner by the appearance of the Marvelous. The inner thought of this transition has been already given; the lovers flee from the institutional world, which is the work of man's reason, and whose object is to secure his freedom, and they enter a Wood, whose characteristic was defined to be external determination. That is, man acts there more or less through influences from without, and not through the works of his own intelligence, not through institutions. Three phases are portrayed, which constitute the three distinct threads of this movement. First, the rational or institutional element being taken out of the Real World, we have the Fairy-land, the

domain of external Accident. Secondly, the rational or institutional element being taken out of the individual man, and specially out of the love of man and woman, we have the realm of internal caprice, and specially the caprice of love. Thirdly, this same rational element being taken out of the poetry, the ideal Fairy-land with its art, drops of itself into a burlesque.

The reader will note that Theseus and his world now disappear from the scene; what they represent is gone, and their place is taken by the fairies. The two realms are verily opposites; when Theseus re-appears, the sway of these supernatural beings at once vanishes, and we come back to the Real World. If we now scrutinize the nature and attributes of the fairies, as here represented, it will be easy to discern their common characteristic. They work upon man, deceive him, lead him about by appearances, victimize his senses; in general, they manifest external determination. But it must not be forgotten that they image man himself, they are simply a portraiture of his own unfree stage of consciousness, of his own delusions. They are both in the man and outside of him, in his soul and in the world; he is, in their realm, exposed to the accidents of Nature on the one hand, and is left to his own caprice on the other. To make man free, social organization fills both his outer and inner life with the Rational, which liberates

the soul from caprice, and the world from chance.

We must notice another strange fact. This new realm, though opposite to actual society, is nevertheless a society, a shadow cast, as it were, from the Real World. It is organized, with a fairy Family and State, with King and Queen, like Theseus and Hippolyta — an image of reality thrown upon clouds. And, though it be the world of caprice, it is also the discipline of caprice, which is gotten rid of by being handed over to itself; the punishment of caprice is caprice. There is, too, a providence here, masking in mischance, and mistake, and whim, out of which at last order and institutions appear. The three threads we shall follow to the end of the movement.

1. Let us now consider the organization of this Fairy World, for it is a regular hierarchy. First comes the common fairy, with a description of her functions. She is the servant — she dews the orbs upon the green, spots the cowslips, hangs dew-drops in the flower's ear — that is, she performs the operations usually ascribed to Nature, which is thus mediated in its activity by the fairies. Next are told the doings of Puck, a servant of a higher order, having also a sphere of independent activity, in which he is the embodiment of mischief, and causes what are usually called accidents. He seems to move in a nearer

relation to man than the other fairies, and has a certain external power over him. Also, the repulsive element of Nature is not forgotten; it stands in open hostility to these beings of beauty — snakes, newts, worms, spiders. Negative Nature, as it may be called for the occasion, is warned off, once for all, from the sleeping fairy queen; only Philomel, with her melody, may approach. The Beautiful cannot abide the Ugly. But the central principle of the fairy organization, and its chief figures, are the pair Oberon and Titania, to whom all the rest are subordinate.

The main fact here to be observed is that the highest fairies are king and queen; hence are not only sexed, but coupled, or, if the term is applicable to these beings, are married. Such is not the case with the other fairies. This hint will furnish the key to what follows, for the sexual diremption is the deepest contradiction of Nature, and the sexual unity is the profoundest harmony of Nature. The pair, therefore, are monarchs, and are placed on the apex of the physical world, whose highest effort is self-production. At present, however, their unity has been disturbed; the two sexes are in opposition; Titania and Oberon have quarreled. What is the result? All Nature is out of joint — in strife with itself; the seasons do not come in their regular order — winter is in summer and summer in winter; the waters have taken possession of the

land and destroyed the labors of man — all of which evils are produced by the quarrel of the royal pair. The cause is explicitly stated by the Poet in the speech of Titania:

> "And this same progeny of evil comes
> From our debate — from our dissension;
> We are their parents and original."

For, when the central and controlling principle of Nature is thus deranged and in contradiction with itself, the effects must be transmitted to all the subordinate parts. Such is the poetical conception of this hierarchy governing Nature.

But the cause of the unhappy separation of the fairy couple has not been forgotten — it is represented to be jealousy. This passion is based upon the absolute unity of man and wife; it asserts that each individual shall find his or her complete existence in the other. If a third person is taken by either, the tie is destroyed. Jealousy, therefore, rests upon the monogamic nature of marriage, and will, and ought to, be manifested in all its intensity when that relation is disturbed. The king and queen of Fairy-land reproach each other with their gallantries — quarrel and separate. Confusion and strife must now reign in the kingdom of Nature. Leaving out of account the mutual charges of infidelity, as equally false or equally true, the fault of the separation would seem to lie with Titania. She is capricious, she breaks

the law of the Family and leaves the husband because he will not "patiently dance in our round." Thus the scission between Law and Caprice is also imaged in Fairy-land. Oberon, however, resolves to assert the husband's right to be head of the family, and is determined to subordinate his refractory wife. His aim is unity and peace — not only in his own domestic relations, but in the entire realm, of which he is the supreme ruler. Oberon loves Titania, he wishes to get her back again; his method is to serve up her own deed to her, as she seems to have the habit of doting on changelings and quitting her husband.

Thus the action sets in towards the reconciliation of the conflict in Fairy-land. Accordingly, he prepares the means for his purpose. It is by dropping the juice of a certain flower upon the eye-lids of Titania when she is asleep, in order to make her fall in love with some ugly monster, the opposite of her nature. The retributive character of this punishment is obvious — if you cannot live in peace with me, one of your own kind, then try the contrary, a horrid brute. Titania, therefore, becomes infatuated with Bottom, the ass. It is the Poetic under the yoke of Prose — the natural result of her separation from her husband, since she has abandoned for the time the beautiful world of the fairies, and its monarch. In this service she undergoes the

deepest indignity; in vain she lavishes her choicest love; her ideal perfections are soiled and unappreciated by the gross clown. The cause of the quarrel is at last removed by the repentance of the wife, "she in mild terms begged my patience," Oberon takes pity on her like a dutiful husband, releases her from her thralldom, and restores her to his bosom. She has had the discipline of caprice, and freed herself of it; but her return is her vanishing along with Fairy-land. Oberon, in these scenes, is the constant one; he is, indeed, a kind of Providence, who employs chance and mistake as his instrument — Puck — to bring about his ends.

Thus the conflict which harassed Fairy-land has been harmonized, and peace reigns. But mark! now occurs one of those transitions upon which so much stress was laid in the first part of this essay. Night flies away; the darkness of the Wood is driven off by the light of the day; the Fairy World disappears with its own reconciliation; the Real World dawns. But this is not all. Theseus, the monarch, is on hand, ready to judge; Egeus is here, with his former collision; all transpires in the clear sunlight of consciousness; external mediation has ceased. Is it not evident that we have returned to the realm of institutions which we left some time ago?

2. Having thus brought the first thread to its termination, we are now ready to take up the

second thread — the lovers. They arrive from Athens, and enter the Wood in the height of the strife between Oberon and Titania. They also bring along collisions among themselves, for two of them have an unreciprocated love. Fairy-land, therefore, is a picture of the condition of the lovers, for both have collisions, and indeed similar collisions, namely, those of the Family. Hermia has left her father; Titania has left her husband; and also the conflicts of the rejected suitors may be reckoned under this head. Here is the point where the relation between the real and ideal worlds may be seen — the one reflects the other. The internal state of the lovers is thus pictured in the world of the Imagination, which was before said to be this Fairy-land — the poetic abode of such forms.

It was also shown that the flight from society must be a flight to a world of external determination; here it now is in full operation. The lovers are wholly influenced by powers outside of themselves; the chief means, for example, is a flower wounded by Cupid's bolt. But these external forms, like the Fairy World itself, are poetic — are symbolical of the inner spirit of man — and, hence, must be interpreted. The common and most natural view is that this flower represents the effects of what the Poet calls "Fancy," a combination of caprice and love, which chooses and changes with wanton whim the

objects of affection. The part of the lovers in the "Wood near Athens" may thus be interpreted to be a play of fanciful, capricious love. This wood is seen to have two elements — outer accident in Puck and the Fairies, and inner caprice in the lovers. Both belong together, both show man in his unfree condition. But standing above both, and controlling both, is Oberon, the providential director of this world, who is guiding it rapidly to dissolution.

On account of the externality of the means, a mistake is possible — the process of love here is not in the heart and emotions. Puck anoints the wrong person. The effect is quite the same as that of a comedy of intrigue in which there is some form of disguise. This mistake, therefore, produces all the results of that very common dramatic instrumentality, Mistaken Identity. In fact, Shakespeare has in several plays indicated that the influence of Mistaken Identity is like that of a dream, since it places man in such new and strange relations that he seems to himself to have been carried into an unknown world. The mistake destroys the only remaining reciprocal tie; the collisions are now completed; each individual hates his lover and loves his hater. There ensues a love-chase through the woods, which furnishes sport for all Fairy-land, till the parties, weary with fatigue, lie down on the ground and go to sleep. The possible conflicts between the two

pairs of lovers are wrought out with a complete, even schematic regularity. Each one loves the one who does not requite the love — the other wants the other — till man and woman are torn asunder, woman and woman quarrel and separate, and man and man not only quarrel, but seek each other's lives. The result is absolute discord; there can be no unity in the non-institutional world. Individualism, antagonism reigns; all are drawn apart by caprice and thrown into conflict; even the two women who do not change their love, but are constant, are drawn into the struggle. Such is the comic outcome of the "Wood near Athens," it destroys itself.

The experience of Fairy-land has settled the question of caprice for the lovers; it has been truly a discipline. The solution of the collision seems external — "crush this herb into Lysander's eye," and all will be right. But really it is internal, and is brought about by command of Oberon, the central power, whose highest object all along has been the unity of the Family in his own case; and, hence, to be true to his character, he must manifest the same traits to the lovers who have wandered into his realm. He sympathizes with true love; the separation in his domain cannot continue, for, as before stated, the highest point and goal of Nature is the oneness of the two sexes, whereby the two individuals are made into the ethical unit above both. Such

has been the aim of Oberon, or, if you please, the aim of Nature, from the beginning. Love is Nature's attempt to remove the separation between man and woman. We may also say that the lovers have run the course of caprice, and found out what lies in their flight from institutions; they awake out of their delusion and are ready to experience the permanent affection upon which the Family reposes.

The lovers start up, and, their difficulty being harmonized, Fairy-land disappears like a dream. Not that they have actually dreamed; on the contrary, the contrast is very distinctly drawn — they sleep, but do not dream, in this realm. In their waking state they compare their night's experience to a dream, on account of the external mediation. The fact is to be noticed, for critics have generally tried to explain the whole work from this single element. The lovers thus find themselves again in the world of institutions — before Theseus the ruler, and Egeus the parent. But, now, the two pairs are in perfect harmony — their love is reciprocal; hence the rational basis of union is present in both couples. Theseus, therefore, reverses his former sentence; he decides in favor of the right of choice on the part of the daughter against the will of the parent — a solution which Shakespeare uniformly gives in all similar collisions. Nor can Theseus consistently act otherwise; for what is he himself doing but

celebrating his union with Hippolyta? The return of the lovers from the Ideal to the Real World is thus accomplished.

Evidently a double process has taken place in this affair. The law which compels true lovers to flee, must be changed, otherwise it saps the foundation of domestic life. The State, then, has had its discipline, and specially its ruler, Theseus, who could not allow the law to break his union with Hippolyta, has been trained and transformed by love. As legislator, judge and executor of the law in one, he decrees and enforces the new law, which brings to harmony the Real World. The Right of Love is now realized, that is, it is made institutional; previously it was but subjective, existed merely in feeling and thought. The lovers, also, as above noted, have had their discipline as well as the State; the one side gets free of caprice, the other of injustice.

3. The third thread must now be resumed — the clowns in Fairy-land. Why are they, too, here? The question forces itself upon the mind, for this would seem to be a place most uncongenial to them. And so it is; the poetic world is certainly not their natural abode. But in the present instance they have left their prosaic occupation; they are transcending their own sphere, and are trying to represent a play — a work of Art — which lies far out of their comprehension. The attempt, however, brings them into the

Fairy-land of Poetry, which is soon found full of strange beings, and they are compelled by terror to leave it with precipitation. A man cannot make, nor indeed act, a drama without entering the mystic Wood — the world of the Imagination. To be sure, the clowns themselves, for going there, can give only a common-place reason — "lest our devices be known;" since, if the plot should be revealed, then there would be no "surprise." But the principle thing to be noticed is how they reduce everything to the dead level of Prose. Their solicitude for the audience is touching; it must be perpetually reminded that these characters are not real, but that they are merely assumed — that I am not Pyramus, but Bottom, the weaver; that I am not a lion — be not afraid! — but Snug, the joiner. The clowns, therefore, have not the primary notion of the drama; they do not comprehend that it is a representation and not a reality. The imaginative form must be at once destroyed, and the illusion of art is always extinguished by their prosaic explanations. This trait is common to all these "mechanicals," and lies deep in their nature; it forms the essence of their comic characterization. They are, verily, mechanical; they reduce all poetic form to Prose. Thus their end is a nullity; they are simply destroying the object which they are seeking to produce — are annihilating their

own end—which principle is the essence of Comedy.

Another trait must not be forgotten—how realistic they are! how true to nature and probability! No sham moonshine for them; they must have the queen of night herself present in her own person, if possible; no pretended wall, or, if it must be represented by a man, let him be plastered. All is to be real, natural, probable. Thus, however, the thought is lost, for the attempt is, not to portray Spirit, but to reproduce the meaningless forms of Nature in their fidelity. One might almost think that the Poet was satirizing the modern generation of critics, so true does he hit their canons. But Nature has to illustrate and portray only Mind in an artistic work; when it ceases to have this significance it is worthless.

Their flight from the land of the Imagination cannot be long delayed. Bottom, the hero of the clowns, appears to them suddenly having an ass's head, the appropriateness of which might be shown in various ways, but it will be manifest. Such does Bottom turn out to be in the realm of Art, and is thus represented even to his own comrades. Terror-stricken at his image, which is without question their own fate if they remain, they flee in all speed in order to avoid being "translated" also. Such is the lamentable outcome of the rude Prosaic in its efforts to reproduce the Poetic. How much of this satire was

intended for his own age by the Poet cannot now be told. But since it was his special calling — the Drama — which is here the theme, we may suppose that it had some foothold in the circumstances of his time.

One other phase of this realm remains to be mentioned. We have just seen with what effect the prosaic clowns woo Poetry; what, now, if Poetry should become the lover and servant of Prose? Such is the scene where Titania falls in love with Bottom — the queen of Fairy-land with an ass. The contrast in all its ludicrousness is here portrayed — the two elements are brought face to face. The motive for her strange conduct has already been stated to lie in her separation from Oberon. The Ethereal is thus subjected to the Gross and Sensual; Imagination and her handmaids, separated from beings of their own spiritual nature, must obey the behests of Prose — nay, be swallowed in its voracious appetite. Her rapt poetic utterances are reduced to groveling common-places; her ambrosial food seems to excite no desire; her soft caresses are turned into grossness; she has at last to tie up her sweetheart's tongue. When she returns to her first love, how she hates the brute. The result, therefore, of the clowns' visit to Fairy-land — the realm of Art — is that they have produced and also beheld a picture, but a picture of their own asininity, and that they have been rudely driven

off from the mystic Wood by its inhabitants. Thus they also have returned to the Real World.

' We have now traced to their conclusion the three threads of the second grand movement of the drama—the Fairy World. Again we are ushered into the presence of the old society from which we parted at the end of the First Act. The difficulty upon which a separation from it was based has disappeared—the collision which created the Ideal Realm has been harmonized; hence the ground of its existence has been taken away. Theseus, who represents the State, no longer gives absolute validity to the will of the parent; and, since it was his adverse decree which caused the flight, there must now follow the return to, and the reconciliation with, the Real World. Here the work of the Poet might be made to end—here it does end in the two previous dramas of this group, for they conclude with the general restoration. But in the play before us he has chosen to make a higher synthesis; he wishes not only to portray an action to the spectators, but also to make the action portray itself.

III.

Hence we must now pass to the third movement of the work, which has not yet been developed—the Representation. The court has demanded Art in which to see itself, or at least

by which to amuse itself. The two actions which have hitherto run alongside of each other are now to be brought up before Theseus and his company, who henceforth assume the part of audience and critics. The poem, therefore, after beholding and reflecting itself, is to criticise itself. But these criticisms will only illustrate the points of view of the different speakers.

I. The first thread of this movement is the story of the lovers, which has been told to the company, as we see by the words of Hippolyta at the beginning of the Fifth Act:

"'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of."

Shakespeare, however, could not well repeat the same story in the same play, and, hence, it is here omitted. The main point dwelt upon by the Poet is the criticism of Theseus. How will he treat the Poetic as it was shown in the strange tale of Fairy-land? His conception is purely prosaic; hence in him Prose again appears, but it is now altogether different from the groveling, sensuous form which was manifested in the "rude mechanicals." Here we see education, refinement, abstract culture. Theseus, therefore, represents in this connection the Prose of the cultivated Understanding, whose skepticism assails all poetic conception and tears its forms to pieces. He derides the "antic fables;" he scoffs at "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," placing

them in the same category; the Imagination itself is made the subject of his sneers — it is full of "tricks," and is placed in striking contrast with "cool reason." The poet's function is to "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name" — that is, the Poet's work is without any actual or rational content. Old Theseus was a downright Philistine, as the Germans would say. It is the prosaic Understanding attempting to criticise Poetry, whose essence is totally outside of its horizon. Theseus will not acknowledge that under this fabulous form may be found the deepest and truest meaning; it is not his form, and, hence, worthless.

The reader will, perhaps, be surprised at this interpretation of the famous speech of Theseus, since the passages above mentioned, which are taken from it, have been quoted by critics of high authority as the most adequate definitions of Poetry and of the Imagination that have ever been given. The fact is, however, that Theseus intends to ridicule both; and his language, on a careful examination, will be found to be that of skeptical derision. Look, too, at the answer of his wife, and see how she understands him.

This wife, Hippolyta, is of quite a different character; she, with all the appreciation inherent in the female nature, is inclined to gently dissent from the negative judgments of her husband. She mildly suggests that there may be some con-

tent in these wild, poetic forms of Fairy-land; that the story of the night—

> "More witnesseth than fancy's images,
> And grows to something of great constancy;
> But, howsoever, strange and admirable."

With this quiet remark she ceases; she does not pursue the discussion further, for she is a woman, and possesses, perhaps, the immediate feeling and appreciation of Poetry, rather than the ability to give the grounds of her judgment. Such is the contrast: Theseus has at his side the opposite form of consciousness—the husband and wife exhibit opposite phases of critical opinion. It may be added that the Poet does not here represent, and cannot represent, the highest critical comprehension of his work, for that involves the statement of the entire content in an abstract form, while he must necessarily employ for the same content a poetical form.

2. But the second thread—the play of the clowns—now comes up for representation. It must also be subjected to the criticism of the audience, mainly composed of these two mental principles—Theseus and Hippolyta. The Duke wants to be amused; he rejects the old plays; he must see something new; he, therefore, chooses *Pyramus and Thisbe*, both on account of its novelty and its absurd title, though against the strong protests of his art critic. The clowns

appear and go through with their play. We again observe in them the same elements which were before characterized—the destruction of all artistic form; the introduction of nature in its immediateness, simply for its own sake, and not as the bearer of any spiritual meaning; rant, which lays equal emphasis on what is important and unimportant, without any relief; ignorance of all technical requirements of acting, with a strong infusion of general stupidity and self-importance. Indeed, it may be said that the separation of the lovers in *Pyramus and Thisbe* rests, not upon a moral obstacle, but a natural object; the basis of the collision in the play is a wall. It exhibits the realistic style reduced to absurdity. The critical judgment of the audience serves to bring out more strongly the contradictions of the piece beneath whose sneers it perishes, Theseus pronouncing upon it final sentence. It will be observed that the clowns have fared hard in their artistic efforts. After a very uncomplimentary picture of Bottom — and, in fact of themselves — they are frightened out of Fairy-land, and thus excluded from the world of Poetry; and now their work is torn piecemeal by the critical understanding. Neither Gods nor Men, Poetry nor Prose, can endure mediocrity in Art, much less stupidity. It will also not escape the attention of the reader that the Poet has por-

rayed, in the drama before us, the two essential phases of the prosaic Understanding in its attempts to attain the beatiful realm of Poetry. Theseus and the clowns have thus a common element.

The three pairs of lovers retire to rest in perfect happiness and peace, and the Poet again allows the Fairy World to flit for a moment across the stage, as if to give one more hint of its meaning. This world is now, too, in harmony; Oberon and Titania, the ideal couple, besides the three real ones, enter with their train and sing an *epithalamium*, whose content is the prosperity and concord of the Family. Thus Fairy-land has done its last duty — it has reflected the peaceful solution of the struggle, whereas previously it had imaged the strife.

At this point the drama must end; its three movements, with their various threads, have been wrought out to their natural conclusion. The reader will probably consider some of the above explanations to be far-fetched, and it must be confessed that the faintest hint of the Poet has often been expanded in full. Such, however, is the duty of criticism; it gives what Poetry cannot, and Poetry gives what it cannot. Besides, in the present drama one often feels that Shakespeare did not always adequately realize his conception; he wrestles with his idea, and sometimes does not succeed in embodying it with

clearness and completeness. Especially the third part — the Representation — caused him great difficulty, and is the least perfect of the three parts. The thought of making the play reflect itself in the course of its own action never lost hold of him during the whole period of his dramatic career. The poem has other inequalities of execution, and bears numerous traces of the youthfulness of the author. But the conception is one of his grandest, though not always clear and definite in his own mind, and, hence, the work is marred with some imperfections. It has been attempted in the foregoing essay to develop the complete idea of the Poet — not in his own beautiful poetic form, but in the abstract form of thought.

Let us express the general movement of this drama from another point of view. In it is introduced the Mythological World, the adequate poetic representation of which, however, gives the Epos. The latter has as its mediating instrumentalities those beings of a realm beyond — the god and goddess, the nymph, fairy, elf, angels; or, to present its negative elements, devils, furies, goblins, griffins, etc. These supernatural powers are portrayed as influencing man externally. They, therefore, do not belong to the Drama in its strictness, for it exhibits man as determined through himself — through his own internal being — through motives, ends, passions,

thoughts. It is the most adequate expression of self-determination, of freedom, and, hence, it is the highest point of Art. The divinities of the Epos may, it is true. be only these internal determinations of man in an external form, but it is just this form which gives the basis of the essential distinctions of Art. The Epos, therefore, passes away in the culture of nations when they come to a profounder self-consciousness, and the Drama takes its place as a truer and more adequate representation of Spirit. In order to ascertain, therefore, the true position of the mythological element in the play before us, we must be careful to note that it also is transitory; it passes away with the dawn of light, the most perfect symbol of intelligence; when the parties fully wake, in the presence of Theseus, it is no more. In like manner it departs in the history of nations. The Poet has thus introduced an epical element into his drama, but only as a subordinate phase; the action moves out of this purely epical world, where, if it remained to the end, it would not give a true drama. A dramatic composition which employs only these instrumentalities of the Epos is a contradiction — it violates its own fundamental principle. Many dramatists have committed this sin against their Art, and thus debauched it, but Shakespeare always remains true to its highest thought; if he seems at times to wander, it is only to return

with additional spoils. The External, though employed by him in all its shapes, he invariably transmutes into the Internal.

It is interesting to study Shakespeare's employment of the Fairy Tale, and see how he turns it into comedy, in accord with its own true nature. It exhibits Accident, the happenings outside of Human Will or Intelligence, thus it embraces the realm of the Marvelous, which, however, must be portrayed as passing into the necessary order of the world. On the other hand the Fairy Tale shows, also, Caprice—subjective whim and fickleness of the individual, but this Caprice must be portrayed as overruled into the Rational. The King of Fairy Land reigns in the realm of Accident and Caprice; Oberon employs both of them to their own destruction; through the means of accident and caprice he destroys Accident and Caprice; under their manifold play, the providential plan is seen gleaming through. This whole "Wood near Athens" is comic, and not simply the single characters thereof; it is self-annulling, its development is into non-entity; like the Forest of Arden, in *As You Like It*, its realization is its destruction; when it truly is, it is not. The world cannot remain non-institutional, governed by chance and whim: thus we must read our great institutional Poet.

The views which have been held concerning the purport of this drama have been various,

and have, as a general rule, seized some one side and considered that to be the whole. It has been thought to be an intrigue of capricious love, and certainly this is one of its elements, namely, the part of the lovers. It has also been called a romantic drama, as if the mythological world were its single thread, whereas it is only one of the several threads which are woven together into the complete fabric. But the most general explanation seems to be that it is a dream. To this view, however, the objections are so strong that it cannot be reasonably entertained. Granting that the world of fairies is the same as the world of dreams, the above-mentioned explanation leaves two entire movements of the play wholely unaccounted for, namely, the first and the third. More than half of the poem is, therefore, decidedly awake and transpires in the Real World. In the next place, it is not pretended that the lovers dream these occurrences in Fairy-land; on the contrary, they first go to sleep after all the events there have transpired. They only compare their experiences to a dream. Then, when we have called it a dream, what is explained, since the content of dreams is so various, and their product is not generally a poem like *Midsummer Night's Dream?* Finally the name of the piece is cited in support of this view; but it may be laid down as a general rule that the titles of Shakespeare's comedies have only the most

remote reference to their contents; several have, in fact, names of quite the same signification. It is true that the world of Imagination bears a great resemblance to that of dreams, and it is just this resemblance, and nothing else, of which the Poet speaks. Hence the necessity of seeking a higher synthesis, which will account for every part of the drama, and will combine its diverse elements into a consistent unity.

Four kinds of materials are wrought together in this drama. First, there is the Classic Mythology, which furnishes one of its greatest heroes, Theseus, and gives the outer setting of the whole action; very properly this Mythology voices law, institutions, moderation inner and outer. Secondly, there is the Fairy Mythology, which arises out of the flight from the classic world, and voices the caprice born of the escape from law and institutions. The third is a high comedy of intrigue, based on love, and recalling the Italian or Romanic element in the Poet's other comedies. The fourth is a burlesque on love, which shows a local character with its English names and English color. Yet all these diversities are transformed into one harmony; the key-note is love, to whose conflicts and final triumph the whole drama is attuned; the Greek, Gothic, Italian, English strains of the play make one music. *

But these four mythologic elements are so

closely intertwined, or rather interfused, that each becomes a vital part of the other. In all we see the classic formative hand at work; Titania, queen of Fairy-land, has a Greek name, having apparently cast away her native name, Mab, as she is called in *Romeo and Juliet;* she is even charged with showing too much regard for the Greek hero Theseus. Oberon is no better; he acknowledges to having "credit with Hippolyta," who is his "warrior love." Thus Hellenic and Teutonic fables are brought together in mutual passion; the Classic and the Romantic in this play not only exchange glances, but kiss, like Faust and Helen. Egeus and the lovers have Greek names and are full of Greek lore, though it is mingled with the customs of the Middle Ages. Even the clowns are going to play a classic play, using a classic fable, just as the Poet himself does in this very drama. In all these things we see the classic spirit of the Renascence wedding itself to medieval romance, and making a new poetic world.

It is worth our while to trace, in a short summary, these four kinds of materials into Shakespeare's play. Again we shall find that Time prepared them for him, and he took the gift. The classic part he must have drawn from books directly or indirectly; Greek Mythology no longer lives on the lips of the people, but works through culture and its instrument, the written word.

Theseus figures in many an ancient poem and work of art; but the Poet probably obtained the first knowledge of him from Plutarch (translation by North), who represents the hero as the tamer of men and beasts, conquering the Amazons, and then conquered by one of them, our Hippolyta. Thus he is the ruler and the lover, too; his story is picked up by Chaucer, and in *The Knight's Tale* is transmuted into its medieval romantic form, which furnishes the suggestion of Shakespeare's Theseus, an heroic shape hovering over a world of love and romance, after struggles ended. But the older poet's work is a tale, having but a single strand, though it remotely hints the structural movement of the later drama.

The second kind of material here used is the Fairy Mythology, which the Poet knew chiefly from tradition; it was the mythical lore which he had heard from his childhood at the fireside, and which, though heathen and under religious ban, continued to live in the undercurrents of the people's faith, where, in one form or other it lives to this day. Still he may also have read about it in some books which were taken from the same primitive source, It is interesting on this point to compare his procedure with that of his elder poetical brother, Chaucer, who also knew of the Fairy-world, and says, in *The Wife*

of Bath's Tale, that in the old days of King Arthur

> **All was this lond fulfilled of faerie,**
> **The Elf-queene with hire joly compagnie**
> **Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.**

But they have been all driven away, and "now can no man see non elves mo;" they, the heathen sprites, have been banished by the Christian world, by "prayers of limitoures and other holy freres, that searchen every land and every streme." So speaks the old poet with almost a sigh of regret in spite of his religion. But in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is not Christianity that stands opposed to Fairy-land, but the Renascence clothing itself in the Grecian myth; it is not religion, formally at least, which banishes the old Northern heathendom, but institutions. Thus Shakespeare here, as everywhere, shows himself as the true child of the Renascence as well as the great institutional poet. The Elf-queen, as stated above by Chaucer, goes back to the time of King Arthur, but not under the name of Titania, which is first found in the present play, while the Elf-king is first mentioned by the name of Oberon in an old romance called *Huon of Bordeaux*, and printed in 1579. It ought to be added that Robert Greene, author of the novel upon which *The Winter's Tale* is founded, wrote before Shakespeare a drama in which "Oberam

King of the fairies" is united with "The Scottish History of James the Fourth, slain at Flodden," which we may fairly think to have been a dramatic suggestion to our poet. Puck or Robin Goodfellow, is celebrated in many a legend and ballad, which, though printed after Shakespeare's time, have their roots in the oldest popular mythology of England.

The third element of the play, the story of Egeus and the two pairs of lovers, is probably of the Poet's own invention, still it has many points of connection with novels and plays of the South. It is a comedy of love, very like some of his other comedies; the means, however, are varied; the fairies are now made to mingle with human beings, in matters of heart. Still the whole is but a picture of the caprice of love, which starts up, changes, and then returns to the first object of attachment. This caprice, in one form or other, is the main comic factor in Shakespeare's comedies, and is connected, in most of them, with some Italian tale.

The fourth element, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe played by the clowns, Shakespeare derived, directly or indirectly, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He may have read it in the original Latin; he could have drawn it from *The Legende of Goode Women* by Chaucer, whose influence has already been traced in other materials of this play; most probably, however, he took it mainly

from a contemporary translation of Ovid by Golding. In this part also he shows the spirit of the Renascence, or possibly its prejudice, by making a classic theme vanish into a farce in the untrained hands of "rude mechanicals." It is thus thrown into strong contrast with the high heroic tale of Theseus, elaborated, as it were, by the skillful touch of the Poet himself.

At this point we see that Shakespeare's procedure is not simply mythical, but polymythical; he employs the mythology not merely of one people or of one age, but he seizes the mythical treasures of Europe, ancient, medieval and modern, for his purpose, and combines them into one work. Thus he shows himself the universal Poet; he is national, but he is also cosmopolitan; his art becomes as complex as civilization, whose jarring elements it takes up and brings to harmony.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

We are now to begin a new group of four plays, which we have called the ideal Tragi-Comedies, in distinction from the real ones, which have already been considered. That is, there is still mediation through an ideal world in some form, but we leave the light comic sport of the group that has just preceded — the realm of foible, folly, absurdity — and pass into a dark tragic world of sin and guilt. The affinity of these four plays to Shakespeare's tragedies is felt by every careful reader, and their spiritual kinship rests not only on feeling, but also on reason.

In fact, this group may be truly said to mediate Shakespeare's tragic world, and to rescue its personages from death. Man has perished through guilt, but now he is to be saved through repentance. If the tragedies unfold Justice as the deep foundation of the world-order, these tragi-comedies reveal Mercy as the still deeper foundation of the world-order. Penitence, on the one hand, forgiveness on the other, are here the profoundest notes of the Poet's art; fate is

is now met by a mightier power, and is subjected to the sway of love.

We may consider *Measure for Measure* as the Poet's grand study in which he gets rid of his overwhelming tragic thought of life. Hitherto, in the great tragedies, he has seen mainly the stern retribution of the ethical order; now he sees the inadequacy of that view, as never before. He turns to mercy, but that he had done in previous works, notably in *Merchant of Venice*, where there is also mediation. At present, however, he moves a step further, and shows the inadequacy of mere mercy by itself, divorced from justice. The two must be united, are united in *Measure for Measure*, after a separation in which the insufficiency of both is manifested; in their union lies the salvation of man and of society. The old world of mere justice — the Roman one, say — will not do, it becomes injustice, cruelty; the new world of mere mercy — it may be the monastic or religious one — will not do, it becomes mere sentiment. Only that mercy which follows after the discipline of justice and results from the same, is true mercy; that which relieves man from the return of his deed, is really merciless. The name of the play seems to signify justice, and to connect its thought with that of tragedy rather than with that of mediation. Still, the measure of penalty is meted out to the measure of guilt, and then

beneath all and after all is the measure of mercy with which the drama ends. The effect of justice is not to destroy the guilty man and thus make him tragic, but to destroy his guilt and thus save him.

The play, however, is not an abstract treatise on the virtues, but concrete as history itself. In fact, it introduces the historical phases which embody these two principles of mercy and justice — namely, Church and State. The contrast is between the secular and religious spheres; religion furnishes in the present instance the ideal realm of mediation in the cloister. Monasticism had its chief function during the Middle Ages; it was the refuge of the weak and oppressed, and especially of those who sought a contemplative life outside of the violence and fierce tumult of secular society. This play is based upon the historic fact. The cloister is just the ideal world placed amid civil institutions, and embodied in a special organization, with the design of reconciling the collisions of the real world, or, at least, of furnishing a place of flight when the conflict is too strong for the individual. In fact, the Middle Ages, by position and character, are mediatorial; they are the mean of History, the middle term of Time, as it were mediating the ancient with the modern world. Their name indicates their character; their principle was religious mediation, in manifold forms.

from the Supreme Mediator, through the Mother and Saints, down to the humblest priest — the whole being embodied in a grand hierarchical organism, carefully graded and shaded from top to bottom. Monasticism, however, like all forms of ideal life, is transitory, as opposed to the rational existence of man in society. Though it endure long after its proper time, though certain peculiar natures cling to it when it has outlived itself, in spirit it has passed away, it has no longer a world-historical meaning. This play has its roots in the great transition out of medieval monasticism into modern institutionalism — a transition which belonged to the Poet's own age, and of which he is here the dramatic architect.

He shows the man and the woman turning monk and nun, then getting rid of the monastery, and becoming again not only man and woman, but husband and wife. Both, too, are mediators, not only of themselves, but also of the world; the consequence is a new life for themselves and a new society for all. They are paired in their very restoration and work through and for each other. Such a family is in itself the image of the world in harmony, is truly the regnant family in the highest sense, we may say, is the holy family.

The date of *Measure for Measure* has not been, and with the present evidence, cannot be deter-

mined. There is no certain contemporary allusion to it or in it, though some lynx-eyed scholiasts have thought that they could trace in it a few faint land-marks of Time, whereby to fix its year. It was first printed in the folio of 1623; with this one fact our external evidence comes to an end. When we turn to the internal evidence, that is almost equally baffling. The play has points of meter and style which connect it with the Poet's whole literary career, especially with his middle and late periods. The easiest way out of this difficulty is to consider that it was revised at different times, and that each revision has left its trace. The play has a refractory tendency to scout all the so-called tests, metrical and otherwise. Still, there is a consensus of a majority of the best judges and deepest students of Shakespeare, which cannot be passed unheeded; this consensus hovers somewhere about the year 1604 as the time of the drama's origin, a time which also marks the center and culmination of Shakespeare's tragic power. This play, then, was born in the midst of his tragedies, and is his first turning away from them to a new view of the world.

But whatever be the chronology, the thought of the play shows a great transition, as already stated; it has still one foot in Shakespeare's tragic world and one foot out of it, and is marching away from that dark realm towards sunrise.

Yet it shows the tragic gloom, even when the vision is looking forward to the dawning light. What the Poet is leaving and what he is approaching, are both present in the play, but his face is clearly turned toward reconciliation. It has strong points of connection with *All's Well That Ends Well* in color, plot and idea; in both is that strange substitution of the woman to regain her estranged lover and husband, through an act of incontinence; in both is the counterpoise of means and end, the ethical puzzle in which the object is good but the action bad. Should Isabella and the Duke employ all this disguise, trickery, and even falsehood to effect their high purpose? The Poet seems to take delight in offsetting the ideal motive by the sensual act, in counterbalancing the moral end by the immoral means. Surely a problem to him then and to us now; to call it Jesuitical sophistry will no longer do, that gives no relief from its pressure to the honest soul. Some defense is needed, the Poet felt its necessity; he repeatedly makes his characters defend their deceit by appealing to the worthy end.

The story is of Italian origin, and taken from Cinthio, who was, also, the author of the novel upon which *Othello* is founded. But before the Poet's time it had been wrought into a drama called *Promos and Cassandra*, by Whetstone. As usual, the novel furnishes plot, incidents and

figures, while Shakespeare furnishes poetry, characterization, and the ethical world. It is interesting to note that the story connects with *Othello;* thus to that dark tragedy is linked the drama of mediation, itself by no means cheerful. One thinks that the very reaction from writing *Othello*, with its terrible retribution of the guilty deed, might have driven the Poet to composing a play which shows the way of mercy, and yet has over it still the shadow of the fateful outcome of life.

Measure for Measure, accordingly, belongs to the class of mediated dramas. The collision has a tragic depth and earnestness; the fundamental tone of the whole work is serious, and even dark, notwithstanding the comic nature of certain portions. The conflict, however, is reconciled and the persons are saved from a tragic fate by the intervention of the World of Mercy. This form of mediation is the main thing to be noticed, and constitutes the distinguishing characteristic of the play. Heretofore we have seen, and hereafter we shall see, pastoral communities and ideal realms of various kinds introduced for the purpose of healing the disrupted elements of society. Now, it is religion, as an organized system, which is brought in with its principles, and which seeks to determine the affairs and harmonize the conflicts of Family and State. Another peculiarity of the

present drama, is that the religious world is not transferred to a territory entirely removed from the political world, but both exist together in this country of Vienna. The ideal realm is, hence, the Church in one of its manifestations, namely, monastic life.

There are three general movements of the entire action. The first is short, but must be considered as a part coördinate with the other two. It shows the disruption which is taking place in the whole social fabric of the country. The ruler, who is the embodiment of mercy, is unable to administer the law on account of excessive leniency towards crime; he leaves the State and betakes himself to the religious realm — enters a monastery. The woman, who is the representative of chastity, is preparing to abandon society and the Family; she also is eager to lead the religious life of the cloister. That is, Mercy and Chastity have taken flight from the secular world. The second movement portrays the conflict in this secular world between formal justice and incontinence; the religious sphere, as a distinct, organized system, undertakes *from without* to mediate the difficulty and fails. The third movement indicates the true solution — the disruption between the secular and religious elements is overcome, and both are united into a principle higher than either taken separately; mercy becomes a constituent of the

State, and chastity a constituent of the Family; formal justice — or, rather, injustice — ceases, as well as the illicit relation of the sexes, in the two grand ethical institutions of man. The merciful monk returns and becomes the just ruler, while the chaste woman is made his wife. It is thus a double restoration from a double disruption.

I.

1. In the first movement the first thread has its central figure in the person of the Duke. Mercy is his predominating trait, but mercy in its one-sided manifestation. Through the pardon of offenses and their tacit permission he has suffered the law to become of no validity, and, indeed, to fall into utter contempt. The result is universal crime and disregard of all authority. He is aware of the evils, but cannot bring himself to execute those enactments which he has permitted to be violated. He must, therefore, abandon the helm of government to others and flee. The office of ruler, who is to administer justice, is too severe for his merciful nature, and, moreover, he has a preference for a retired, contemplative life. Accordingly, the very first scene of the play represents him as transferring his authority to his deputy.

He recognizes his mistake to be excessive leniency; to restore respect for law, and to secure

society, there is need of a sharp, decisive remedy. He, therefore, selects as his substitute a man of quite the opposite character, a man who will enforce the law rigidly to the letter. Angelo is taken, whose temperament is cold and inflexible, and whose knowledge of the statutes is most ample. But his chief characteristic is the strictest adherence to formal justice. He is, therefore, the person best fitted by nature to enforce the old enactments which have fallen into desuetude, and, in general, to restore the reign of law which seems to have taken its departure from society. Angelo, too, appears to be as rigid with himself as with others; he has reduced to submission the fierce appetites and passions of the body; he is ready to subsume himself under his own principles. Such are the grounds for his selection by the Duke. We may now expect the sway of justice in all its severity, for it is the world in which Angelo moves—is the fundamental consciousness from which spring all his convictions and actions.

It would seem, however, that the Duke, notwithstanding his laudation of Angelo, has still a lingering suspicion of his deputy's weakness, or at least believes that mercy cannot be entirely banished from the administration of the law. One ugly fact in Angelo's history is known to him, as will hereafter appear, namely, the treatment of Mariana. Hence the Duke will not leave

Vienna, though he gives out that he has gone to Poland; he must remain in the country to watch an experiment whose success he does not regard as absolutely certain, if he be true to his sense of duty and his benevolent character. He cannot deliver his people over entirely to formal justice, if he have any faith at all in his own principle of mercy. His stay is, therefore, necessitated by the situation.

The Duke has also thrown up another bulwark against the extreme tendencies of Angelo's disposition. Escalus has been appointed to the second position in the State, with large authority, and he possesses also great influence on account of his character and his age. In this man the element of mercy again becomes the predominant trait. He will try to tame the legal ferocity of his associate, and in his own judicial capacity he will decide with moderation — indeed, with leniency. The Duke, to a certain extent, reappears in him — not as supreme now, but as subordinate; for it is the principle of both of them which has broken down the administration of the State, and, hence, must not again be made paramount. Such seems to be the reason of this double authority, and such the true relation between Angelo and Escalus. Mercy and justice thus form the contrast of their characters, and are supposed to be united in the execution of the law.

But whither will the Duke go when he quits

the State, with its laws and institutions? He can only follow the bent of his nature and enter the pure realm of mercy, if there be such in existence. He will find it in the organization of the Christian Church. When, therefore, he abandons secular life, he can betake himself only to a religious life. Accordingly, he enters a monastery — assumes the habit of a holy friar, whose life is devoted to works of benevolence and mercy. His special duty is now that of an adviser, confessor, mediator; he is to soothe the individual in affliction, and harmonize the struggles incident to weak humanity. He is not of the world, but descends into it as a power from without — as a messenger from Heaven — in order to reconcile its difficulties and to banish its doubts. Religion means mediation, and the priest must mediate, not only between God and man, but also between man and man. Therefore the Duke, as friar, henceforth becomes the chief mediator of the play.

But we must not fail to notice the other determinations which flow from his situation. He will have to be in disguise, for he remains in his own city; in his ordinary garb he could not help being generally known to the citizens. He is thus compelled to act a species of falsehood from the start. Moreover, his influence is external — comes from a sphere beyond — for he no longer possesses any authority to realize his views and

intentions. He is, hence, forced to resort to trickery and deception in order to accomplish his ends. Thus a taint is thrown upon his character and calling which no plea of good results can wholly remove. But his shrewd devices totally fail of their purpose. The lesson seems to be that this separation of the secular and religious worlds has a tendency to pervert both from their true nature, for both thus become immoral, though in different manners; they must be united and reconciled in the institutions of man.

Let us now attempt to state, in abstract terms, the movement of which the Duke is the center. Mercy finds itself unable to stem the lawlessness of the time; it is too kind-hearted, and rests too much in the emotions. It permits offenders to go free and violence to remain unpunished; it, therefore, saps the foundation of law and institutions, which must always rest upon the responsibility of man for his deed. The whole realized world of right seems to be crumbling to ruin; such is the result of mercy in its one-sidedness. It, therefore, takes its flight from the State, after resigning all authority into the hands of justice — justice in its extreme severity — which now, in its turn, undertakes to control society. The course of the play will show that justice, too, breaks down; it destroys what it ought to protect, and violates its own principle; it becomes, in fact, just the opposite of itself, namely, the direst

wrong. Such is the outcome of justice in its one-sidedness. Mercy, therefore, must return to the world — but not in order to destroy, or even to displace, justice, for thus the old conflict would be renewed; but both must be reconciled and united in one principle. Each, taken by itself, is inadequate and one-sided; only their unity is true justice or true mercy.

2. We are now ready to take up the second thread of the first movement. The Duke alone cannot completely represent the dissatisfaction with the present condition of society; he must have his counterpart in the other sex, whose principle is chastity, and whose institution is the Family. Isabella is the embodiment of this element of female virtue; but we observe that she, too, is about to abandon the world for a religious life. The motives to this step on her part are not fully stated, but are sufficiently implied. The licentiousness of the time must make society distasteful to her pure nature; she will, therefore, leave it, and seek a life of perpetual chastity in the nunnery. But even there the rules are not strict enough for her, as she says when she is seeking admission. The intensity of her principle is thus made manifest. Religion is the ideal realm to which she flees in order to avoid the conflicts of life, and to preserve intact her deepest conviction. She will also perform important mediations hereafter in the play.

To express this thought abstractly, chastity sees itself assailed and disregarded in the world; it can find a solution of the difficulty only by an entire annihilation of the sexual relation — that is, mankind will be pure when it is destroyed. Chastity, therefore, betakes itself to a realm of its own, and leaves behind merely incontinence, which is also destructive of man. Both sides are thus negative, inadequate. The true solution of the problem is that chastity and the sexual relation must be reconciled and united in the Family, which then controls both elements, and becomes a religious institution in the truest sense. The Duke and Isabella, in their devotion to one virtue, or to one phase of a virtue, have abjured the domestic relation; the Poet, in order to bring about a positive solution, has to make the monk a husband and the nun a wife.

Let us now sum up our results, and mark the necessary transition to the next movement. There has taken place a spiritual breach, which produces two worlds — the religious and secular. The religious world has two principles — mercy and chastity — which principles have been taken away from the secular world. In the latter, therefore, remain abstract justice on the one hand — for mercy has departed, and the illicit sexual relation on the other hand — for chastity has fled from society to the cloister. Such is the logical result of the flight of the Duke and Isa-

bella to their monastic life. In the secular world, therefore, two principles are now found which can produce only the most bitter conflict—formal law undertakes to root out licentiousness.

II.

The second movement unfolds fully the conflict in the secular world between extreme law and extreme license; but chiefly, it shows the attempt to mediate this conflict through the monastic phase of religious life. We shall see that the attempt fails completely; the religious and the secular worlds are not to be separated, but united, nay, wedded; institutions are to be filled with religion, and religion is to descend into and dwell with institutions. The holy living is not a divorce from the world, but a marriage with it, and divinity becomes divine when it becomes secular. In accord with the theme, we notice three groups which give the threads of the action: that of religion, that of law, and that of license.

1. The first thread comprises the religious element—the Duke and Isabella mainly, who seek to be the mediators of the conflicts which are about to arise. They are the heaven overarching this earth; but the heaven is very high and distant, and the earth is very earthy. Isabella, we

are told, is "a thing enskied and sainted, by your renouncement an immortal spirit"— which is, perhaps, the trouble with her; she must come down from her pure celestial perch, and impart some of her virtue to the world which needs it sorely. Then she will be not merely chaste, but also good. The Duke, too, has entered the celestial realm, from which he seeks to play the part of Providence; he has to descend from his upper ethereal region, and mingle among men in order to save them, and, we may add, in order to save himself. Thus the man and the woman, the two celestial characters, have the same discipline; they find that their very virtue may become narrow, cramping, indeed self-destructive, and must be transcended. Yet their flight from the world is not without its blessing for them; they needed just the experience of the cloister in order to get rid of the cloister: above all, they have discovered that they are for each other, belong to each other, and cannot do without each other. Thus the purity of the monastery passes over into the purity of the family; and thus too, through the same process, extreme law and extreme license are mediated, being transmuted into a true institutional life. Very beautiful is this celestial arch spanning the poem, this providential rainbow encircling the skies and resting upon the dark clouds of earth — it is indeed a promise, not yet fulfillment; both rainbow and clouds will

vanish when the sun comes out in his fullness, illuminating both earth and heaven.

2. The second thread is made up of the instruments of justice, from the deputy down to the pettiest officer. The characters in this class are contrasted on the principles of mercy and justice. The difference between Angelo and Escalus in this respect was before noted. In the humane Provost of the prison, mercy becomes again the predominant trait, while in the brutal executioner, Abhorson, justice shows its most revolting feature. The constable, Elbow, in a low sphere, is a stickler for legality, like Angelo in a high sphere; both, too, are guilty of a violation of the law which they execute.

The law must now be enforced in all its severity. The particular form of its violation which will be taken by the Poet can easily be inferred from the flight of Isabella, the representative of virgin purity. One of the primal institutions of man is the Family, whose true existence depends, not only upon the mutual fidelity of husband and wife, but also upon the chastity of man and woman. Hence legislation has always sought to erect barriers against the passions of the human race, in order to protect this institution. But in spite of every effort the evil has not been extirpated, and in all civilized societies there is a despised and outlawed class which has been called the negative Family. So it is, so it has

been, and will probably continue to be; the fact alone is sufficient for our present purpose.

The law against incontinence was the one that was first taken by Angelo, and of whose enforcement there was, of course, the greatest need. An old enactment which had long lain dormant, and which prescribed death as the punishment for the offense, is suddenly raked from its obscurity and executed with rigor. Here was formal justice, undoubtedly. Angelo was technically correct — the law had never been repealed — yet his conduct under the circumstances was palpably unjust. But the character of the deputy is to adhere simply to this formal side, to the neglect of all others.

3. The third thread is now to be unfolded. The whole world of incontinence, in all its phases, must come up for portraiture, since it is the object against which the law directs its shaft. Angelo proposes to sweep it out of existence; hence it must appear, in order to be swept out of existence. Such is the reason for the introduction of this element; to be exhaustive, the theme had to be treated. But it has brought the play into great discredit. The question has been asked whether such a subject is suitable for artistic treatment. If Art exclude the Ugly and Repulsive — in general, the Negative — then there can be but one answer. But a critical canon of this sort would exclude from Art every

great poem of modern times. Such a subject cannot, upon any general principle, be stricken from the list of artistic themes; the most that can be said is that the Poet was unnecessarily coarse and revolting in his portraiture. But, to any one who takes delight in depth of thought and completeness of treatment, this drama must furnish a great and permanent satisfaction.

(*a.*) The incontinent world, which the critic has also to consider, is divided into two very distinct groups of people, between whom the Poet makes the greatest difference — quite the different between guilt and innocence. Yet both are liable to the law, and must suffer punishment. The first group is composed of the most degraded members of the negative Family above mentioned — those who have lost both chastity and fidelity to the individual, these two virtues being an object of purchase and sale. Here we remark that loathsome sore of modern society, popularly known as "social evil." As before stated, it assails the existence of the Family, since the latter depends upon the absolute and unreserved devotion of one man and one woman to each other. "Social evil," therefore, destroys the primitive natural basis of the Family.

The Poet has laid much stress, and gone into great detail, upon this not very attractive element of his play. All its essential phases are portrayed — the persons, their talk, their conscious-

ness. The woman is there, the "unfortunate female;" also the besotted *habitues;* still again the more fashionable customers — soldiers, apparently — Lucio, and two other "gentlemen." Upon them the law falls with a heavy hand; they are dragged before court, and dismissed with an admonition by the good Escalus. For a second offense they are again brought in, and all sent to prison, which is now full of this class of people, so that the clown compares it with Mistress Overdone's own house.

Lucio, one of these persons, seems to be not very consistently drawn in his various acts and relations. His connection with Isabella is surprising, since they cannot have much in common. He is, perhaps, the meanest character to be found in Shakespeare. The only purpose of his life is lust; he is utterly devoid of any ethical principle — he is absolutely hollow. Decency, truth, fidelity, are meaningless to him except as they may subserve his passion. He jeers at and betrays the clown, his own tool; he villifies the Duke; he informs on the woman who has taken care of his own illegitimate offspring. Thus he is faithless, lying, slanderous, as well as lecherous. Shakespeare has elsewhere portrayed villainy in colossal proportions, yet with some powerful motive, but meanness he has concentrated in Lucio. The reader will be ready to excuse any further details upon this part of the drama, though

the Poet evidently considered it of great importance.

(*b.*) It is the second group, however, of this incontinent world which gives rise to the leading incidents of the play. Its persons differ from the persons of the first group in the fact that both parties — men and women — have fidelity, but have lost chastity — that is, they are true to one another, though they have violated the commandment. It is the class which is often said to love "not wisely, but too well." Such are Claudio and Juliet. It will be noticed that these possess the essential basis of the Family, namely, fidelity to the individual; but their fault, equally with the former case, comes under a violation of law which inflicts the penalty of death upon the man. Claudio is willing to have the marriage rite performed; his intention is to be true to his betrothed; but nothing can help him against the stern deputy. Such is the conflict; Claudio is, in spirit, the husband of Juliet, but has failed to comply with the form, which, however, he is ready to do at once. Shall he now suffer the same punishment as one who transgresses in full — one who is both unchaste and faithless?

In order to rescue him from death, the mediations of the poem are introduced. Claudio's sister, Isabella, who is just about to become a nun, is hastily called upon to intercede with the deputy for the life of her brother. She at once

strikes the heart of the subject; she pleads the cause of mercy against the rigor of the law; she alludes to the redemption of all mankind through the Savior against the strict demands of justice. Her thought is similar to that of Portia, in *Merchant of Venice*, on a similar occasion. Finally, she bids him think whether he is not guilty of the same offense, and so condemns himself in his own sentence. In the second interview the deputy says that he will save the life of her brother on condition that she yield up her honor to him, to which proposition she gives an indignant refusal.

Let us consider, for a moment, the logical bearing of these two scenes. Virgin innocence comes to plead for incontinence. Isabella feels the conflict within herself in making such a plea, but, on the other hand, the life of a brother is at stake. She tries to soften the offense in every way — she who has placed chastity the highest in her vow. This is what seduces the deputy, with all his severity of character. Virtue pleading for its own overthrow can alone touch his rigor. Accordingly, he replies in substance, with logical precision: If incontinence be so trivial an offense, yield to me. Thus Angelo falls — becomes the violator of his own deepest principle, namely, legality. The man who adheres to form alone must always exhibit the same weakness. If he had loved chastity as much as he did the law, he

could never have fallen. Just the opposite is the case with Isabella. Though inconsistent in her request, she spurns his proposal; for her, chastity is the highest principle. Isabella, therefore, can no longer plead for her brother on such grounds, and Angelo can no longer assert his own innocence. Angelo has lost his integrity, but Isabella has not obtained her request; Claudio's safety must be brought about by some new means.

But another conflict and more anguish await Isabella. She goes to her brother and tells him of her rejection of the base proposition of the deputy, expecting his admiration and approval. Great is her disappointment. But how could she expect that her brother, who cared so little for chastity, would be willing to sacrifice his life for her purity? He asks her to submit, but she, true to her principle, again indignantly refuses, and breaks out into a curse upon her incontinent brother. Thus Isabella passes triumphantly through her double ordeal against deputy and brother.

This plan has now failed to save Claudio; another mediator must be brought to his rescue. This is the Duke, disguised as a friar. He designs to overreach Angelo in his lustful proposal. A young lady once betrothed to, but now abandoned by, the deputy is substituted for Isabella. This is an important turning-point of the drama, and it must be carefully noted. The disguised

Duke, in order to save Claudio from death, brings about the very same offense for which Claudio was condemned. It is the demand of mercy to rescue the unfortunate man, for law has inflicted an unjust punishment — has become wrong. To get rid of the injustice of law, the offense is repeated; law thus condemns — indeed, logically destroys — itself, since it forces the very crime which it seeks to punish, in order to thwart its own injustice. Also, the highest officer of the law is made guilty of the same crime which he unrelentingly punishes. Thus the inherent contradiction of the law is shown in the plainest manner.

The injustice of the statute is amply motived by the Poet. It is, in the first place, an old enactment which has long lain unexecuted and unknown; in the second place, the punishment is wholly disproportionate to the offense. But the main point of its wrong is that Claudio is still true to the spirit of the law, whose whole object was the protection of the Family; for he was faithful to the one person, and ready to fulfill the ceremony. He is caught in the letter of the enactment, which, no doubt, he had violated. To avoid the monstrous injustice of the penalty, the law is trampled under foot.

But even by this last scheme Claudio is not rescued; Angelo violates the agreement to release him. It is perfectly natural that the deputy

should act thus. His promise has violated his own deepest principle — why should he now be restrained merely by his promise? In fact, it is just the strength of that principle of abstract justice within him which drives him to disregard his word and to give orders for Claudio's death. The deputy, however, in his own person has broken loose from his principle; now his fall is accomplished in act. He can hardly be called a villain, though he is narrow, bigoted, and even cruel. His conduct springs directly from his conviction, which is adherence to the form rather than regard for the spirit of justice. He loves the law more than the essential object of the law; hence he falls into contradiction just at this point; he becomes a libertine in punishing libertinism. Isabella knew the man when she said to him in regard to her brother: "If he had been as you, and you as he, you would have slipt like him;" that, too, was a home-thrust of hers: "Go to your bosom, knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know that's like my brother's fault." His abandonment of his betrothed was from a formal ground — she did not live up to her contract in furnishing dower. Finally, he exhibits the same trait in the last words which he utters in the play, when he says, in substance: "Execute me according to law." He thus shows what is his ultimate principle, as well his own readiness to have it applied to himself.

The result of the disruption between the secular and religious worlds is now manifest — the one has become criminal, the other helpless. Justice has turned out utterly contradictory of itself, and mercy has sought in vain to mediate the wrong. The nun, whose vow is eternal chastity, has been compelled to plead for incontinence, and even then has failed. The monk, who left society for religious works, has been forced to resort to trickery and deception in order to accomplish his humane end; and he, too, has not succeeded. The purposes and principles of all are shattered and broken, and death is still hanging over Claudio. It is clear that external mediation cannot clear him, nor, indeed, can it save society. There remains one alternative — the return of the Duke to power, to the secular world.

III.

This is the theme of the third movement, which is now to be considered. We shall, therefore, behold the restoration of mercy to the State, which cannot dispense with it. The abstract form of justice grinds the world to death. That form, however, is necessary to society; the purpose here is not to underrate it; only, it is not absolute — it has limits. The question always is to ascertain these limits.

Also, mercy without justice is equally impotent — means social disorder and violence. The play starts from an anarchy produced by undue leniency. The Duke must come back from his religious life; the result is true justice, of which mercy is a constituent.

The Duke is now to judge the world before him in accordance with his two principles. The first class of offenders are left in prison to atone for their guilt; the Duke does not discharge them, for they are truly amenable to justice. Their punishment was mild in the first place, compared to the penalties of the law. The gentle Provost and the good Escalus receive his approbation for the happy blending of mercy and justice in their actions. Barnadine, the prisoner from youth and the victim of the forms of law, is brought in and pardoned. This character does not fit well into any particular thread of the play; still, he is a striking illustration of its general theme. Each person gets his dues, yet none perish — not even Angelo, who repents of his deed, and must be forgiven; he has, too, a wife, whose claim cannot be forgotten. The Duke has learned to be just as well as merciful.

Four pairs are brought up before us, representing various phases of marriage. Lowest of all is the union of Lucio, who is compelled to wed one of his kind as a punishment. Men and women are in this case both unchaste and faith-

less, yet the child born to them necessitates the Family. The second pair is Claudio and Juliet, who love and are willing to comply with the inherent result of their conduct; they have been faithful to one another, but unchaste. The third pair, Angelo and Mariana, represent the same phase in general; the woman here has at least love and fidelity. In all these cases the Duke makes marriage the solution of the difficulty, instead of destroying the offender. The object of the law could have been only the security of the Family; yet that object would certainly not be obtained by killing the husband. Thus the Duke by his decision reaches the great purpose of the law, and at the same time shows mercy in its true sense and limitation. But the fourth pair, the Duke and Isabella, have the indispensable condition of the true union, for they alone possess chastity before marriage. This element has been dwelt upon by the Poet, in other dramas, with great force and beauty. Isabella intended to take the vow of perpetual chastity; that is the best reason why she should enter the Family. It is Mistress Overdone and her class who ought to take such a vow. The Duke has also entered monastic life, but his virtue cannot be spared from a society in which there is none to throw away. He and Isabella are thus modeled after a similar pattern, and go through with quite the same experience. Both

of them, independently of each other, fled from the prevailing corruption; they sought to annihilate the sexual relation entirely, since it is productive of so much evil. But they discover their own chastity and fidelity, which form the true ethical basis of marriage; thus they belong together, and are united at the end of the play. Conventual life is inadequate, and passes away; the disruption between the secular and religious worlds is healed; their reconciliation and union are found in the institutions of man, in which religion becomes the most potent principle, but loses its forms, its organization, and even its name.

The historical groundwork of this drama lies deep in the development of European nations. The same separation is witnessed; the various monastic orders — and, indeed, the Church — have stood outside of the life of society, yet have tried to control it by manifold instrumentalities — very often in the manner of the Duke — by intrigue and cunning. A time of general violence like the Middle Ages may receive much benefit from such a system. But monasticism gives only a negative solution to the problem of sin; it makes the world holy by destroying it. Man is, hence, not likely to remain contented with the solution. The Reformation struck at celibacy and attempted to sanctify the Family, so that it became, not merely a tolerated evil, but a

positive religious institution. Luther the monk, like the Duke, took a wife. The Poet has presented both sides of the subject in their truest aspects; he manifests no bigoted or partisan prejudice in his treatment; there is portrayed the pure conflict between two principles, but it can be seen that he has given the solution of his own age and nation to the question of monasticism.

But the main fact of the play, as regards its place in the total work of Shakespeare, is its transition from the period of tragedy to that of reconciliation. Doubtless it indicates a spiritual epoch in the Poet. The Middle Ages, mediatorial in time, character, and name, are taken as the historic framework of this great change, which belongs to all society as well as to the individual man. The Duke and Isabella move out of their abstract virtues, out of their pure but negative lives into a true institutional existence. The best thing about both is, that they develop, beautifully develop out of the old into the new along the line of humanity. Isabella particularly has found much favor with critics. She is stainless, loves the ideal, is also active; but she cannot rank with the Poet's greatest mediatorial women — Portia, Hermione, Imogen. She fails in what she intends—in the rescue of her brother and in her cloistered life; but she succeeds in what she does not intend, namely, in getting a good husband, and of the highest rank possible. In this play the mediatorial man is above the woman.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

There is no doubt that *The Winter's Tale* is a hard play to read, particularly for the first time. The thought is both intricate and elliptical in many places; it delights in subtle turns and leaps; we have to come to its perusal not merely with our appreciative, but, to a degree, with our creative power. Style is dark, broken, involved, often artificial, at least at the first glance. Meter is frequently no meter, or it is constructed without much regard to the line of ten-syllables — a fact noticeable in all of Shakespeare's latest works, of which *The Winter's Tale* is one. The older the Poet grew, the more restless he became in the limits of English blank-verse with its monotonous Iambic lilt. He sought to break it up by various devices and to introduce into it some new music. The result is that the versification of the present play, while not so fluent and harmonious as in his earlier works, has a far wider sweep and flexibility, showing indeed an orchestral variety and strength.

In general, we may observe an apparent neglect of niceties of language for grand results;

there is a disregard of little perfections of form for mighty outlines. We see the poet in a struggle with human speech as if it had, to a certain extent, become refractory to his thought, as if it could hardly bear the burden he was laying upon it. But in proportion as the outside is negligent, and even crabbed, the inside is harmonious and profound. From the external form we are driven to grapple with the inner meaning, and the Art beyond Art begins to catch the glances of the soul. As the Poet himself in his later life withdrew into himself, the outer sensuous glow is dimmed; but so much the stronger is the inner spiritual radiance. We feel that he is already entering the realm beyond, even in this life; the spirit has risen transcendantly above the letter, and the inner soul of the drama is far more important than its literary beauty, whereby, however, a new beauty begins to dawn.

It is for this reason that over and around this drama particularly a religious atmosphere hovers. There is in it a certain other-worldliness which we shall hardly find elsewhere in Shakespeare to the same extent; sometimes it shows almost an ascetic tendency; it touches questions which are usually considered theological. Still it has the secular rather than the religious form; it plays, outwardly at least, in the Heathen more than in the Christian world; it is antique, yet filled with an overflowing modern spirit; the

classic lines vanish under our eyes into romantic shapes which hold their allegiance to the Beyond.

The play is, accordingly, characterized by its frequent and direct defiance of the senses. Time and Space, which constitute the basis of the great world of sensation, seem to be entirely given over to the capricious play of the Poet's imagination. Even the so-called truths of the Understanding are laughed at in wanton mockery. History, Chronology, and also Geography are violated with an audacity which has often called forth the sneers and the ire of pedantic erudition. Christianity consults the Delphic oracle, Pagan customs are mingled with those of the English people, ancient Greece is one of the modern European system of states, Bohemia is made a country bordering on the sea. Indeed, the Understanding becomes utterly confused by the disregard of its facts and its laws, and can make nothing out of the play. It is plain to be seen that there is an utter neglect — or, rather, an intentional defiance — of all external probability. In fact, Probability, as a canon of Shakesperian criticism, is wholly meaningless and inapplicable; there is scarcely a play in which it is not violated. The time has come when it ought to be eschewed altogether. The Poet seems to have proceeded thus on purpose. In other dramas, as in *Tempest*, he has gone to work indirectly by portraying an ideal world removed from the common conscious-

ness; but in *The Winter's Tale* he takes pains to give the lie direct to all sensuous and immediate elements. But, notwithstanding these contradictions — or, indeed, by means of these contradictions — the deep purport of the play stands out in bold relief; we are compelled to seek beneath the surface to find its meaning. Our senses are confused with the design of forcing us to turn to its creative thought for the solution of its difficulties. In this realm — that of thought — the drama is all harmony; and here we must seek for its unity, since the sensuous unities of time and place, and the abstract laws of the Understanding, are everywhere ignored.

Many of these cases which show such a defiance of Space, Time and Causality, can be traced to Robert Greene's novel *Pandosto*, which was Shakespeare's source for the present drama. But the Poet has not only adopted the main improbabilities of the novelist, but has added others of his own equally great. The bear which consumes Antigonus at the right moment, the storm which swallows all witnesses of the exposure of Perdita in the nick of time, the long seclusion of the Queen, her final appearance as the statue moving down from the pedestal, are some of his incidents which pile chance upon chance, and transform the whole into a marvelous story, a Winter's Tale of wonders told in the evening at the fire-side, with the human shapes sitting

around in the weird borderland between light and darkness. To this strange coloring of his play the Poet has repeatedly alluded in the course of it, and he manifestly intended to transform Greene's book into the fantastic spectacle of Chance swaying the destinies of man, a grand fantasia on Accident ruling the world.

Thus all the characters are given up to the sport of circumstances; but over this realm of contingency hovers an order; Chance is seen to be held in the grip of a higher power. Life has some secret principle which controls Space and Time, controls what seems to be accident, controls even falsehood and wrong. This is, in literature, the domain of the Fairy Tale; in all these wild happenings there is an inner law to which even the cometary world of hap-hazard must be true. This is a law which brings back Perdita, restores Hermione, reconciles Leontes, as well a law which recalls the Earth lightward in her flight from the Sun. To the outer glance the drama is a tangled luxuriant jungle of causeless incidents; now what is the controlling principle which holds it together? As in the world, so in this play we have to look for the providential hand if we are to see it.

In the first place, there is the principle of Repentance, which, in its full sweep, is the making the wicked deed undone; it is a recall of the wrongful act and of the disposition which led

to it, by an inner punishment and transformation. Now it was the wrongful act of Leontes which caused the scattering of these people, which drove them out of a world of reason and order, and subjected them to accident; it was a caprice of the ruler who destroyed the law and the reason of the world, and delivered it up to unreason and external chance. Hence that idyllic realm of Bohemia, the wild dominion of Nature, is created by the deed of the King, who is the head and center of law and civilized order. Still further, it vanishes, must vanish with the undoing of his deed, with his repentance. Thus, as in a miraculous legend, the whole phenomenal world is brought into dependency upon repentance.

But there is a second and even deeper principle in the play. This repentance of the King is brought about by the conduct of the wife, Hermione; she endures wrong till wrong wipes itself out; her principle is patience, supreme patience which can wait for Providence, that is, can wait till injustice meet with its own doom. She sees the mistake of her husband and endures; through this martyrdom of endurance she brings to him repentance. Thus she is the grand mediatrix of the drama, enduring for another and thereby mediating him; to this trait of hers we may give a scriptural name, and call it long-suffering, inasmuch as her character as well as the whole drama has a strong religious cast. Her principle,

then, is the all-conquering one — long-suffering; pour upon it the entire measure of falsehood and wrong, heap over it the whole world caprice and accident, still it will triumph, and in the end will not only control but transform its own foe. In such way the Poet has constructed a Marvelous Tale in dramatic form, with an outer phantasmagoric realm of changeful destinies, but with an inner spiritual fact which orders and controls all Wonderland.

Chance undoes what Chance has done, in the play before us as in all, even the lightest, comedies of Shakespeare, and reveals in some phase the law, the necessary order of the world. We see, in his earliest drama probably, *Comedy of Errors*, the undoing of Chance by Chance, while through this destruction of mere contingency the realm of institutions appears. But in *Winter's Tale* there is beneath the play of Caprice and Accident the movement of Guilt and Repentance; and beneath these, lying still deeper, is Long-Suffering, which at last commands the winds, and the waves, and the tempest, controls the elements for its purpose, and shows itself able to summon the providential hand. But to behold this hand in the drama, we must take a long and deep glance into its thought and structure.

There are three grand movements or divisions of the drama. The first portrays the guilt of the

King of Sicilia, and ends in his repentance; it is the world of strife, contradiction, and wrong, which necessarily causes a separation, a flight from his iniquities. The second movement shows the new world called into existence by the tyrannical conduct of the monarch, which is Bohemia, the simple pastoral realm that is free from the tragic conflicts of Sicilia. But it, too, will ultimately develop a collision within itself, which will bring about its own dissolution. The third movement is the penitent world, in which the King, having repented of his deeds, sees those who were dispersed brought back, and those who were lost restored to himself. The logical thought of the action, therefore, is that guilt produces the second or pastoral world, and repentance the third or the restoration. But both the guilt and repentance of the King must be supplemented by the patience of the wife, which is thus the distinctive mediatorial principle of the play. If we take general terms to express these different elements, we may name them the Separation, the Mediation, and the Return. All the mediated dramas of Shakespeare, as distinguished from his tragedies and pure comedies, have three movements of a similar character. For the guilt of man can be atoned for only by repentance; and Art, the representation of man, must employ the same instrumentality.

I.

The single thread of the first movement is Leontes, about whom the incidents and characters will be grouped. The starting-point of the action is the friendship between the two kings, Leontes and Polixenes. The first scene shows also the good feeling existing among their subordinates. Polixenes, King of Bohemia, has been paying a long visit to the friend of his youth, King Leontes of Sicilia. Nine months have passed delightfully away, and the royal visitor is about to return to his own country. The harmony between the two kings and their courts is thus indicated; now comes the rupture. The wife of Leontes, Queen Hermione, at the request of the King, urges Polixenes with great ardor to prolong his stay, and, to enforce her appeal, she seems to have given a caress and indulged in some familiarities. Her husband, Leontes, is fired with jealousy at her behavior; from friendship for his guest he changes to deadly enmity, from affection for his wife he turns to the deepest hatred. Jealousy is based upon the complete unity of marriage, and when the unity is disturbed by infidelity, that passion is manifested, and should be manifested, in all its intensity. But a suspicious nature may imagine a wrong, or draw conclusions from totally insufficient

grounds. Such a nature Leontes undoubtedly possesses.

Still we must not forget that his jealousy proceeds from affection, and has in it a faulty goodness, with the possibility of recovery. He takes up the wrong thought, refuses to dismiss it, coddles it, till he finally comes to believe in his own delusion. This is the curse — the curse of harboring the lie in the thought till it grows into the very texture of the mind, which then cannot get rid of it without a long disciplinary process.

The Queen's regard for Polixenes proceeds chiefly from the fact that he is her husband's dearest friend — she loves him only through her husband. This is manifest, not only from her conversation with him, but also from her defense in the Third Act; and the very warmth of her conduct toward Polixenes results from the desire of pleasing her husband in the entertainment of the companion of his youth. This consideration, however, does not enter the mind of Leontes; he views her external behavior only in its worst light; the spirit of it he does not — indeed, cannot by his nature — comprehend. Perhaps her conduct might be called indiscreet under certain circumstances, but the present case is certainly one in which she ought to abandon all coldness and formality. The King in his soliloquies has stated the principle of his action. He has a vague feeling — an affect — that his wife is false

to him; and because he imagines it, therefore it must be true. That is, he entirely yields to his first impulse, and justifies his first fancy. Her former character and life weigh as nothing. He is now fully possessed of his purpose to destroy both his friend and his wife, which he as king can carry out in all its destructive consequences.

What are these consequences? They will involve in their sweep the destruction of the entire Ethical World, from the merely individual relations of man up to the highest and holiest institutions of civilization. In his mad passion and stubbornness he assails everything which is considered right and sacred. Let us try so seize these various elements in their gradation. First, he wantonly tramples under foot the deepest and most honorable personal relations — those of true friendship and honest service; he casts away Polixenes, his friend, and Camillo, his counselor. Having firmly determined upon his course, he seeks to make Camillo the instrument of murder. The honest servant is shocked, and will not believe the charge of infidelity against the Queen; he has independence of character, though a subordinate, and will not surrender his conviction in obedience to a master. Still, he seems to assent in order to save Polixenes and the Queen; he lays his plan evidently while talking with the King Leontes. Here we have the fundamental traits of Camillo — devotion to the highest ends, com-

bined with a secret and deceptive cunning in attaining them. He is the chief mediator for both Kings in this matter; he has often "cleansed the bosom" and soothed the excited mind of Leontes, like a priest at the confessional, and the latter now foolishly expects his aid in a scheme of infamy. Hereafter he will stand in the same relation to Polixenes. He unites the loftiest purpose to politic shrewdness; his deception must be justified by the end. The other personal relation which is assailed by the jealous King is his friendship for Polixenes. The life of the latter is to be destroyed under the hospitable roof, but the plan is thwarted by the intervention of the mediator, Camillo, who warns him in time and provides means for his flight. But Camillo, too, has to leave Sicilia; he is given the same relative position in the court of Polixenes as in that of Leontes, and so transfers his allegiance to another king and country.

Now, let us consider for a moment what is involved in this act of the Sicilian monarch. He has logically destroyed friendship by his jealousy; no man can consistently be a friend to him. He has, furthermore, driven away honest counsel; for has he not made it impossible by his conduct to Camillo? No friends, no honest servants, can live with him. They have fled; but whither do they go? They are not lost, but they have a world of their own which receives them. It

must be in many respects the opposite of that realm which they have left. The Poet will portray it hereafter; indeed, he must do so to complete his work. We shall watch, then, for the place where Camillo and Polixenes are next found, being assured that it must have some entirely new characteristics.

Leontes has thus destroyed, under the influence of his ferocious passion, the sphere of personal relation in the true friend and in the devoted servant. But he has at the same time assailed something far more important — the Family. He has unjustly and wantonly struck it in the most tender point, namely, in the chastity and fidelity of the wife. The consequences are shown in all their rigor. The wife is a mother; her offspring must be stained with the suspicion of illegitimacy; her high-spirited boy, Mamillius, perishes from the wound of his name. She is also about to become a mother — her highest maternal hope is turned into dishonor; her innocent child is bastardized. Thus little is left of the Family. But what is the fate of poor Hermione herself? Every wrong and every indignity which the wife can suffer is heaped upon her by the jealous tyrant. At first Leontes tells his suspicion only to Camillo; but, after the flight of Polixenes, he considers all his imaginings to be confirmed, and now he accuses his wife of infidelity in the presence of the whole

court. Thus he tries to blast her honor before the world. But several of the courtiers, and particularly Antigonus, are ready to assert her innocence in the most emphatic manner, and it is evident that public opinion is strongly against the King. But, to confirm his suspicion by religious sanction, he sends to the oracle at Delphi — not so much for his own information as "to give rest to the minds of others." The Queen is thrown into prison, where to her mental anguish is added the physical suffering and anxiety of a premature delivery of her child. Still, though spirited and asserting her innocence, she is patient and wifely under the atrocious inflictions of her husband.

But Leontes is now to have his deed held up before his eyes; he is to be told in the plainest terms of the nature of his conduct. No courtier was bold enough to tell him this; the most any of them said was to declare the innocence of the Queen. But to proclaim openly the guilt of the King was reserved for a woman — one who could best know her sufferings and feel her wrongs. The Queen, with her gentle, loving character, could not assume such a part. Hence Paulina appears — certainly a strong-worded, perhaps a strong-minded, women. Her deepest principle of action is devotion to the Queen. She is married, but her love for her husband is evidently not so strong, for she seems to treat him

pretty rudely. Her husband is Antigonus, who was the boldest of the courtiers in the defense of Hermione; yet he has submitted to his wife, who must, therefore, be still bolder than he. This Paulina brings to the King his infant, and holds up before him his actions in language lacking in neither strength nor precision. The King cannot get any of his attendants — and, least of all, her husband, Antigonus — to put her out of his presence. But Leontes is not touched with compassion, though he has "no rest nor day nor night;" he ascribes it to the wrong cause — to danger from the weak and imprisoned Queen. Paulina leaves the infant with the King, who, after deceiving Antigonus into a pledge to perform any command that he might enjoin, orders the unfortunate man to expose the child in some remote and desert place

Hence Antigonus falls into guilt and perishes. His promise was not binding, and, indeed, he does not seem at first to have proposed the exposure of the child. But a dream appears to him — he thought that the ghost of Hermione commanded him to do the deed; in fact, he loses his former belief in the innocence of the Queen, and now deems that the child belongs to Polixenes. Finally, religious superstition adds its mighty power; he considers it to be the will of Apollo that the babe should be

exposed. Excited by his imagination, against his own deepest conviction, he leaves the infant in a desolate spot, where it is picked up by some shepherds; but he receives retribution for his deed in his own destruction. The babe is thus removed from the court and civilized society; it has been cast into an opposite world — among the rude, but honest natives of the wilds — where, however, it obtains nourishment and protection, which it did not find in the civilized court of Sicillia. This is the second separation — the second departure to the new realm — that of Camillo and Polixenes being the first. We shall watch with interest for the reappearance of the little outcast.

Leontes has now committed a new and graver offense against the Family; he has, as far as his will is concerned, destroyed his own offspring. His jealousy has driven him to the point of first branding with infamy and then exposing the child of his loins. Now, the great purpose of the Family is to protect and rear the tender and helpless scions of the race. That end is here annihilated by the King; he has on this side, too, destroyed the Family, as before he destroyed its unity, by assailing the character of his wife. The child is thus sent out of the realm; it must be taken elsewhere that it may be preserved, for here there is no longer any family to guard its infancy. The one to whic

it belonged has perished; it must find the Family in another place — it must pass to some land in which domestic ties are possible.

But the final wrong is about to be inflicted upon the poor wife, Hermione. She has to undergo the ordeal of a public prosecution; the indictment charges her with adultery and with the intention of murdering her husband — just what she is not guilty of. But the crowning trial of her life manifests only the more clearly the crowning trait of her character. Her defense has one key-note through all its variations — wifeliness. She always has been, and always will be, true to the Family — true to her function of wife and mother. As to Polixenes, her love toward him was such as Leontes himself commanded —

> "Which not to have done I think had been in me
> Both disobedience and ingratitude
> To you and toward your friend."

"It was for your sake that I loved your friend." She is ready to die because the Family, the object of her existence, is destroyed; her husband's favor, the crown and comfort of her life, is lost; her children are taken from her; her reputation is publicly blackened with the basest accusations. Not life, but honor, she pleads for, since this descends to her children. It is the most heroic assertion of the Family, in spite

of the most terrible wrongs that can be perpetrated upon a human being. She is the glory of her sex; nothing can shake her devotion to the deepest principle of womanhood. The Poet has given to her a will of Titanic strength, yet she is gentle as a dove. Her husband inflicts upon her the sum total of injustice, he pours upon her innocent head all the vials of iniquity, yet she does not cease to love that husband, and in the end forgives him. To bring to the highest possible pitch her heroism, these wrongs fall upon her in the most delicate condition of woman — in the very throes of maternity. Still she is unshaken in her devotion; in comparison with her endurance the old Greek heroines dwindle into pygmies. Hermione is the absolute wife; her character is the apotheosis of wifehood. In her the Poet pays his supreme compliment to woman; he builds a new world upon her long-suffering.

The King is inexorable; his jealousy is not yet satiated; the Queen is condemned to death. She receives the sentence, not from an impartial tribunal, but from the lips of the King himself. Though he has repeatedly promised a just and open trial, according to the English sense of right, it is the mockery, not only of the essence, but also of the forms, of justice. Herein the King commits a new offense against the ethical order of the world — he destroys the end of

the State. For its great object is to secure justice to man, but in the present case the purpose is perverted by the ruler to the grossest injustice. Thus the State can no longer exist in Sicilia; it must logically perish with the annihilation of its end.

But one more institution remains to be destroyed. The messengers return from the Delphic oracle with the response of the god totally adverse to the acts and purposes of Leontes. It simply reflects the existing ethical sentiment of the community, as it ought. What will Leontes now do? He blasphemes, he asserts the falsehood of the oracle, he denies religion. The highest principle of his people he tramples under foot; the most complete expression of their conviction he ignores — indeed, gives to it the lie direct. Further he cannot go in his destructive tendencies — he has assailed the highest. Now follows speedy retribution; the death of his son is announced to him, whereat Hermione is borne out apparently dead. It ought to be noticed that these incidents, which seem to be a consequence of blaspheming the oracle, are motived clearly and adequately in other passages. Thus the boy, Mamillius, has been observed to be pining away on account of the supposed dishonor of his mother; the apparent death of Hermione, and the circumstances attending it, are unfolded in a later part of the

drama. And the oracle itself tells only what everybody knew already — what the Poet had amply motived before. It simply gives in a religious form the universal conviction of the time. Why, then, does the Poet employ the oracle? Because he wishes to portray the negative conduct Leontes in its completeness and final culmination. He is made to deny religion — or, the profoundest principle of his nation and his age.

Let us now turn back and mark the gradation of guilt through which Leontes has passed. This is the single thread in the first movement. He has destroyed the realm of personal relation in Polixenes and Camillo; he has destroyed the Family in all its elements, by the dishonor and legal murder of his wife, and by the loss of his children, which loss is but the direct result of his deed; he has logically annihilated the State by perverting its end to the most wanton injustice; and, finally, the religious principle of his people he has trampled under foot. To sum up his conduct, he has destroyed the entire Ethical World, as far as his act goes. This world interfered, as it ought always to interfere, in order to prevent wrong and shield the innocent; the result is, he has ruthlessly destroyed it — that is Sicilia can no longer be the abode of man. For it is just these ethical relations and institutions which society stands on; without them

it falls to pieces. The monarch who is to administer, uphold, and vivify them has become their destroyer.

Though the King, as the head of the civil tribunal, may condemn Hermione, she has been acquitted by the highest tribunal — Universal Reason — or, at least, the ethical feeling of the nation, which is represented in the oracle. The god has declared the innocence of the Queen; the entire basis of the King's jealousy is thus swept away. All his acts have had the one motive — the infidelity of his wife. But even the highest of all tribunals does not at once change the mind of the King. It is only when retribution is upon him, that he begins to see the consequences of his action. His son, Mamillius, is torn away by death, the cause of which was the unjust accusation of his mother. Leontes now comprehends that his deed is returning upon him; that the destruction of the Family means the destruction of his child and heir; that all his other iniquities will bring forth the same fruits. He realizes that the annihilation of all will include his own annihilation. It comes like a flash upon his mind. Hitherto he has not felt the evil consequences of his wrongs; but the moment they are brought home to his own person he changes, and with him the course of the play must also change.

Undoubtedly this change of the man is sudden, but it is real. The momentum of guilt pushes the

soul to the last point of tension; the precipice is reached, the look is given, the turn is made, at once and forever. In such a moment the thunderbolt falls, the cloud is rifted, and a voice is heard out of the dazzling brightness: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

The King is now ready to make his wicked deeds undone — in other words his soul is ready for Repentance. He recounts his bad actions and seeks forgiveness; first of all he reconciles himself to Apollo — with the highest ethical principle. He confesses, in deep contrition, his wrongs against his Queen, against Camillo and Polixenes. To all he will make the most ample restitution in his power. But, in order that he may still more profoundly realize the enormity of his offense, and in order that his pride and stubbornness may be humbled to the dust, Paulina, whom he had formerly driven away in anger and disdain, now comes to preach her previous sermon with increased vigor, severity, and length — a courageous, strong-worded woman, who is a little too free with her tongue over a penitent wrong-doer. A lord has to restrain her; but Leontes even asks for her castigation — a good sign that it is no longer needed. The King declares:

> "Once a day I'll visit
> The chapel where they lie; and tears shed there
> Shall be my recreation; so long as nature
> Will bear up with this exercise, so long
> I daily vow to use it."

Here we see stated and enforced the great mediatorial principle of the race, namely, Repentance. Man has the power of making his wicked deed undone; he can reverse the wheels of life and can become fully reconciled with himself and the world. Spirit is able to heal its own wounds — is able to master its own negative elements; for its characteristic is to be universal, and, hence, it is sovereign over all forms of finitude. The doctrine is not merely a religious one, but also a philosophical one, and must be recognized and practiced by every rational being of whatever creed. But Repentance is to be complete; it involves confession of the wrong, deep contrition, and full restoration of every advantage derived from guilt. Then the deed is undone; the crime is wiped out; the penitent individual returns to his previous condition of innocence and repose — becomes reconciled with himself and with the world. Such is the general purport of Repentance in the dramas of Shakespeare, which, however, is more prominent in this play than in any other. It sounds like a Christian sermon, though its dress is Pagan. Its thought belongs to the modern world, though its external form is mainly cast in a Grecian mold. Leontes repents — repents fully, deeply. This Repentance involves the restoration of the world which he has lost through his guilt; it will be given

back to him in the third division of the action. Thus the work becomes a special or meditated drama, whose principle is mediation through Repentance; for how is the guilty man to be saved, even in a play, except by a penitent heart? The King, however, has to unmake his disposition — has to reconstruct his entire character — since it is tainted through and through with jealousy. The process of elimination will be as slow as that of growth; day by day the vicious element must be plucked out, till finally the regeneration is complete.

Thus the King has started on the road of Repentance, and Hermione, in her very misfortune, is victorious. From the beginning she has seen that her husband was the victim of a delusion, and tells him plainly, "You, my lord, do but mistake," whereas, in another such conduct might be the result of villainy. She, also, sees that he will repent: "How this will grieve you when you shall come to clearer knowledge." She knows the man well; equally well does she know her own duty. "I must be patient." Patience is the golden key of life; we have already called it long-suffering which can calmly endure, till wrong undo itself by its own judgment Nay, she recognizes the purgatorial nature of her affliction, it can become a blessing: "This action I now go upon is for my better grace." No resentment, but still love for

the erring husband; for a moment she wishes that her father, the Emperor of Russia, might see her in her misery, "yet with eyes of pity, not revenge." When the final blow, the wrath of Apollo, smites Leontes, she swoons and is carried away to begin her long work of patience, till her husband be truly restored to her in spirit. Her work of patience and his work of penitence go together, unite at last in a new marriage and become world-restorers.

We see that Hermione is mistress of her own problem, severe as it is; she mediates herself, then she mediates her husband, and finally the whole world about her. She is, indeed, crucified, but just that is the means; untried she were not herself. We behold in her the wife as mediatrix, not the woman in love, as Rosalind, Portia; they are active, she is more the endurer, her principle is long-suffering under wrong, theirs is immediate inclination. Both sets of characters have love, have its sacrifice of self, and its consequent mediatorial power, but they manifest it in very different ways. Hermione is Patience transfigured and saving the world.

But how about Leontes? It is implied above that there is still a germ of good under all his bad deeds; his jealousy really springs from love, nay, from the belief that love must be pure or not be at all. Undoubtedly his jealousy is a great delusion which seeks, from love, to destroy the

loved object, and thus he is turned into the opposite of himself. Now, such a man can be rescued by taking away his delusion, and by working a change in his disposition. In other words such a character can be mediated. Just this is the point of comparison between him and Shakespeare's other great type of jealousy, Othello. Critics, especially Coleridge and Gervinus, have very subtly distinguished between the two kinds of jealousy seen in Leontes and Othello, much to the advantage of the Moor. From these expositions we would have to infer that Shakespeare made a great mistake, that Othello ought to be saved and Leontes perish. The trouble lies mainly in the wrong conception of the character of Othello, who, though not naturally jealous, has in him, through his previous unrepented deed of guilt (see our essay on Othello), just the seed of all jealousy. Hence he cannot be mediated till that guilt be gotten out of his soul, and this it is upon which Iago works with such tremendous effect. Such a pre-existent deed of guilt is not found in Leontes, though he be naturally jealous. The great contrast is, the one is tragic, the other is not; is there any ground for it, or, is this, too, an accident, in fact, a double accident? Again we must affirm that the Poet is loyal to reason and to his art; above all he is loyal to the ethical order of the world. It is true that Hermione is a wife different from Desdemona, but

even Hermione could not have saved the Moor without his previous penitence, by which alone he is able to get rid of the deed and the disposition from which his jealousy springs as certain punishment.

But guilt has done its work — the great breach has taken place, the ethical world has been destroyed; Sicilia, the civilized realm of institutions, now disappears. The King enters upon his penitential life, which will be prolonged, but whose exact period is determined by the external requirements of the play. The exposed infant must have time sufficient to grow up to be a young woman. We have accordingly to leave the court of Leontes, and cast our look upon the new realm which has already arisen.

II.

We are now prepared to consider the second general movement of the play — the pastoral realm of Bohemia. Though it has a king whose act will again call forth a collision similar to one of those in Sicilia, yet its chief tone and character are derived from the life of the shepherds, and the entire action is laid in their rustic abodes. This is the land where all have arrived who were cast off by Leontes. The logical connection of it with the preceding movement has been already noticed; it is the product of the tyrannical guilt

of the King of Sicilia. These persons can no longer exist in that country; they fly, or are brought, to a place where it is possible for them to live. Such a place must be quite the opposite of Sicilia. The latter is portrayed as a wealthy and civilized State, which, however, is in internal struggle on account of the character of its ruler. Bohemia, therefore, is wholly different; it is a poor, mountainous, uncivilized region, inhabited by shepherds. But it is free from the strife and calamity of Sicilia; its people are simple and humble, yet at the same time they are joyous and humane. We shall here have a continual round of jollity, in contrast to the tragic severity and gloom of the first part, because the country is not harassed with the deep social contradictions of Sicilia. Pastoral life in its full hilarity and freedom from anxiety will be unrolled before our eyes—a primitive condition of man, almost before evil enters and introduces strife, will be depicted.

But such a society is transitory; it must rise to civilization. It develops contradictions within itself by which it is destroyed. Its destiny is to return to Sicilia, which has passed through such difficulties and has harmonized them. There alone it can find peace and reconciliation; hence the entire pastoral world will return to the contrite King Leontes. Bohemia is thus the means whereby those whom Leontes has

driven away are restored to him, and whereby the leading breach of the play is healed. Its function is, therefore, mediation, since it is the external instrumentality of the return, which, however, has its necessary logical ground in the repentance of the King.

1. The threads of this pastoral world are three. The first thread shows the life and occupation of the shepherds, with their sports and merry customs. They give color to this entire part; it is essentially their world. Their kindness and humanity are shown in the rearing of Perdita, and in their sympathy for the fate of Antigonus. Their rustic love, with its petty jealousy and rude directness, their songs and dances, their manners generally, are portrayed in a broad, comic license; everywhere is seen an honest, hearty merriment; simplicity, honesty, and even stupidity, are the marked traits of these people. It is the idyllic land of primitive innocence. But even here there is contradiction; in the lowest group of this world is found a negative character — Autolycus. The simplest form of existence would seem not to be without conflict.

Autolycus is, however, not wholly a product of shepherd life, but apparently of the court also, having been formerly a servant of Prince Florizel. He is, moreover, negative only to the honesty of the pastoral character while he par-

ticipates in its free joyousness and sportive nature. He is one Shakespeare's higher efforts in comic delineation, ranking under the same class as Sir Toby Belch and Sir John Falstaff. He is a rogue not so much from malice as from pleasure; he takes delight in thievery for its own sake rather than for its gains. He is aware of his misdeeds, and laughs at them; his life is folly, to be sure — but, then, he wants to enjoy his own folly, His cunning is a source of continuous chuckling to himself; the property won is of far less account. He is comic to himself and plays a comic part for his own special amusement. He, therefore, belongs to the class of consciously comic characters, who make fun and enact folly chiefly for themselves. He celebrates his vagabond life and thievish disposition in verse; it is a theme for Art with him. Such a person stands in contrast with the simple, honest shepherds; but, still, he is of them, and harmoniously blends with their world. He furnishes the intrigue and disguise of this little realm, and is, hence, the source of its comic situations. Under many deceitful forms he appears to the shepherds, picking pockets, peddling worthless trifles, extorting money by threats and lying — a cunning rogue on a small scale, whose function is to make a ripple in the tranquil life around him. He will assist in

breaking up the pastoral world and transferring it to Sicilia, where he will repent.

2. The second thread is the love of Florizel, son of Polixenes, and of Perdita, the supposed daughter of an old shepherd who is the chief figure here, but she is in reality the daughter of Leontes. The exposed infant has grown up and belongs to this world, for Sicilia has cast her off. She has inherited the chief trait in the character of her mother — devotion to Family. Moreover we may see in her conduct, flashes of the supreme maternal characteristic — long-suffering; she is always the possibility of an Hermione. She would be able to endure to the last, were the call made upon her; whenever the flint of trial strikes upon her simple girl-life, sparkles of courage fill the air, illumining her character. But she is her mother as a young maiden; the relation, therefore, in which she appears will not be that of wife, but of lover. With the quiet strength and deep ethical feeling of Hermione, she combines all the warmth and simplicity of youthful love. In her modesty she thinks herself unworthy of Florizel, and has a presentiment of the collision which will interfere with their union. She distributes flowers to the company — the most beautiful emblem of virgin purity; they are also her language. Only the natural bloom she will have; no flower artificially streaked will be allowed to remain in her garden; no decep-

tion, no artifice, is her meaning, and such is also her character. The abstract reasoning of Polixenes on nature she does not understand, though she assents; she is herself the simple flower, unconscious of its own beauty.

Florizel, who had accidentally met her when he was engaged in the chase, has the same intensity and devotion; the King's son descends to a rural maiden. He acknowledges love to be the highest and strongest principle; it has even subdued the gods. His conduct is in accord with his declaration; he is ready to sacrifice all to his affection. This pair must be logically connected with the first part. In Sicilia the Family has been destroyed by the act of the King, who has condemned to death Hermione, his wife, though the deepest principle of her nature was domestic fidelity and devotion. Here, now, the Family in general, and that of Leontes in particular, must be built up anew through the child of Hermione and the heiress of her character. Hence it is necessary that in this pastoral realm, as the mediatorial world, there should be a restoration of the Family destroyed by Leontes. This thread has a highly poetical coloring, as distinguished from the vulgar, prosaic style of the rude shepherds. Still, the love is idyllic; Perdita is a shepherdess, and is thus the connecting link between the two main groups.

3. The third thread shows the doings of Polix-

enes and Camillo. Both were driven off by the wrong of Leontes; both have evidently found in Bohemia what they did not obtain in Sicilia. Polixenes, it is true, was king of this country before he visited the court of Leontes; he accordingly, only returned to his own kingdom. It is, therefore, slightly different from the purely pastoral realm, such as we see in *As You Like It*, for it has a monarch, though its institutions and its court do not appear. Camillo has made himself indispensable to the ruler; again we behold in him the faithful minister — having been compelled to flee for his honest service, he has found it possible here. But he longs to return, and lay his bones in his native land; he has, moreover, heard of the repentance of Leontes, and the deep desire of the latter for reconciliation and forgiveness. It is manifest that the strongest wish of Camillo's heart is to be restored to his country, especially since that which separated him from it has been wholly removed. He is the great manager — he will find some means of accomplishing his end. It must be observed that he expressly declares that the repentance of the King of Sicilia is what motives his return.

Both Camillo and Polixenes have heard of the strange love of Prince Florizel, who has of late quite abandoned the court, and is seldom absent from the house of a lowly shepherd, the fame of whose daughter has also reached their ears. The

father is naturally anxious; his plan is laid: Camillo and himself, disguised in a strange garb, are to go to the house of the shepherd and take observations. Here we have the comic disguise so often used by Shakespeare in various forms; it is the element of intrigue which he commonly employs in the more refined and courtly part of the dialogue. Camillo and Pólixenes carry out their scheme; they converse with the maiden and are charmed with her pretty ways; they talk with the old shepherd, who tells them concerning the love of the pair. Finally, Florizel himself is examined by the disguised father, and declares in the most absolute manner his passion for the fair shepherdess; he protests that all, even the greatest empire of the world, would be naught without her love. Now comes the conflict; the father asks his son: "Does your father know of your choice?" The Prince says: "No; nor shall not." At this point the knot is untied — the parent throws off his disguise; in his kingly wrath he condemns the old shepherd and the maiden; he threatens to bar his son from succession to the throne if he does not at once return to court. Thus the pastoral world is destroyed by the harsh judgment of the monarch; the aged shepherd laments his wretched fate; Perdita weeps, and tells Florizel to follow the command of his father. It is plain that she can endure, she is the true child of Hermione; she bids her high lover, "of

your own state take care;" she will return to her condition, "I'll queen it no inch farther, but milk my ewes and weep." But the Prince has before emphatically stated his principle — everything, even the kingly dignity, is subordinate to love. He, therefore, determines at once to flee with Perdita — but whither? Now comes Camillo, who is himself anxious to return to his native country, and he at once suggests Sicilia. The whole matter is easily arranged; a little deception, indeed, is practiced upon Polixenes, but a mediator cannot be a severe moralist, and Camillo is no exception to the rule. Scruples must be passed over, to some extent, in all reconciliation and mediation; rigid obstinacy, even to principle, is not going to produce harmony.

The lovers hasten to a ship conveniently at hand and take passage for Sicilia. In that country the Family is now possible, since Leontes has repented of his wrong against it, while Polixenes, in his turn, has here assailed its existence. Camillo will follow them in company with Polixenes, who is seeking to bring back his son. Even the two shepherds, together with the rogue Autolycus — who, true to his negative character, has brought about this departure — are carried away in the ship to Sicilia. Thus the pastoral world is quite depopulated, and now disappears; the same contradiction, essentially, has overwhelmed Bohemia which formerly destroyed Sicilia. Bo-

hemia, however, has now performed its function — that of mediating a restoration to Sicilia of all those who had been driven away; it is the external instrumentality of the Return. But the internal movement is that, as it was called into existence by the guilt of Leontes, so it must necessarily cease with his repentance. Pastoral life is at best a transitional stage of society; it must pass into a higher principle.

This second movement has quite all the elements of a Shakespearian comedy. It has the low group of characters speaking in prose, and it has the genteel group speaking in verse. It has also a double comic disguise — that of Autolycus on the one hand, and that of Polixenes on the other. As the first part is weighed down with a tragic severity, so the second part moves with a frolicsome lightness. This change has been frequently condemned or misunderstood. It has been said that it divided the play into two disconnected and irreconcilable portions. But a true insight will reveal the intimate logical relation of the two parts — that the second movement is directly derived from the first. Besides Shakespeare has certainly as great transitions in other dramas. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* we at once pass from the real world into the fairy realm, and in *As You Like It* there is a sudden leap into comic pastoral existence very similar to that of the present play. The same is the case

with the entire ideal class of mediated dramas. The only means of solving these difficulties is to have recourse to the logical movement of the thought which creates the work.

III.

The third and last movement is now prepared for, whose theme will be the Return, which, as before stated, was involved in the repentance of Leontes. We are at once transported back to Sicilia, and there find the same personages whom we left sixteen years before. The King is still in deep contrition for his former conduct; the character of the court seems entirely changed — it is like a house of mourning; on all sides we behold the world of penitence and sorrow. One of the courtiers thinks the wrongs done by Leontes have been sufficiently atoned for, and is urging him to take a wife for reasons of State. Paulina opposes and extorts a promise from the King never to marry without her consent. Here begins the little intrigue of this part, which will be solved by the reappearance of Hermione. The King's devotion to his wife, supposed by him to be dead, as well as the fullness and sincerity of his repentance, are seen in every act and word. The widower's conflict between duty to the living and affection for the dead has arisen; the latter is shown to be the more powerful. We

are thus forced to conclude that Leontes has made his wicked deeds undone to the extent of his power, and has completely remoulded his character.

While they are all still conversing, news is brought of a strange arrival, and shortly afterwards a son of Polixenes with Perdita appears before the King. Here again the penitential sorrow of Leontes breaks forth; he is full of confession for the wrong done by him to the Prince's father and to his own children. But upon this fair scene a thunderbolt suddenly falls; a messenger rushes in, announcing that the pair are runaways, and that Polixenes has arrived in pursuit of them. That is, the conflict of the pastoral world is transferred to Sicilia, where alone it can be reconciled. The lovers beseech the King to intercede for them and to maintain the right of the Family, which of course he must now do, since he has repented of his own sins against the Family. Leontes has thus changed from being the cause of conflict and guilt to being their mediator, a trait which is the necessary consequence of his repentance. He is the more ready to act on account of a strange instinctive affection for the maiden, who has recalled to his mind the image of Hermione.

The scene of recognition and forgiveness follows, which, however, is not brought upon the stage, but is narrated by eye-witnesses, in order

that the reappearance of the Queen may form the climax of the drama. Before the King come Polixenes and Camillo, with whom there is at once reconciliation. The friend and the honest servant are restored, from whom he parted company in the First Act. But also Perdita is discovered by the most certain evidence to be his lost daughter, who is thus restored to him, together with a son-in-law in place of the deceased son, Mamillius. But, to complete the influence of this realm, Autolycus, the rogue of the pastoral world, sees and confesses the mistake of his former life — repents and asks the intercession of the two shepherds, who have been rewarded for their humanity and honesty, and are now in high favor with the rulers. Thus even the negative character of the humble class is transformed in this atmosphere of repentance, and both the collisions of the pastoral realm are here harmonized. This last Act is, indeed, the penitential world, full of heart's sorrow, and the relief which comes of heart's sorrow.

But the final and supreme restoration is yet to be accomplished. The entire company, at the earnest request of Perdita, who longs to behold her mother, go to see the statue of Hermione in possession of Paulina, the fame of which has been artfully noised abroad. The theatrical effects and beautiful motives of this scene need not be given in detail; the statue moves, descends, and

embraces Leontes — it is his living wife, Hermione. Her existence has been prolonged only in hope of the return of her daughter, though her son was dead and her husband alienated. That hope is now fulfilled in Perdita, who kneels and receives her mother's blessing. Thus the original separation between husband and wife, which caused the play, has been overcome — the action is ended. If we turn back to the first movement, we find that every principle there violated has been made good — Personal Relation, the Family, the State, and also Religion, which has been satisfied by Repentance. Two persons, however, do not return — Prince Mamillius — whose loss is, partly at least, compensated by the gain of a son-in-law — and Antigonus, the husband of Paulina. But she, too, obtains her reward in a new husband, one whom we may suppose to be more congenial to her nature than Antigonus. Camillo, at the request of the King, is united to her; the male and the female mediatorial characters, both royal and subordinate, belong together.

If we now bring before the mind the various elements of the drama, we observe that there is first portrayed the civilized State in which a disruption takes place, being produced by the guilt of its King. This guilt causes a flight to a primitive condition — to a pastoral world — which, in its turn, develops contradictions which bring

about its dissolution. But the monarch repents of his guilt which called forth the disruption; he undoes his deed without, and reconstructs his character within. From this fact results the third part or movement, whose theme is the restoration of the separated members, and the consequent unity and harmony of the two previous spheres which were in contradiction. Wrong produces the division, repentance brings about the reconciliation, long-suffering has called forth repentance. The pastoral drama is inside the social drama, and helps to mediate the latter by saving the true heir. The realm of romance finds its place between the two phases of real life.

Thus we must say that Perdita, Camillo, Polixenes, even the son are restored by this salutary realm of Bohemia. Yet Sicilia is also a land of spiritual restoration: an internal process takes place in it, corresponding to the external return from Bohemia, whereby each side is prepared through its own special training for the other; when they come together, the individual life and the institutional order are in complete harmony. In his lighter comedies, the Poet shows us the school of folly, weakness, caprice, particularly the caprice of love; but here it is the deeper and darker discipline of guilt and repentance, underlaid with the mediatorial long-suffering of the innocent woman.

This whole drama is a strong glance sent into

the heart of that fact which perpetually meets us in human life and in the world's history: the good have to suffer for the bad, and thereby bring them back from their evil career, indeed from their self-destruction. Therein, however, the good have their reward, namely, goodness; for unless they did so, they would not be good. The innocent soul, writhing in unmerited suffering, will cry out: Why is this trial sent upon me guiltless? Possibly, too, it seems to come through the guilty who succeed in their wrong, and then escape. Nay, nay; in the entire sweep of Time they will not succeed and escape. Still there are clearly two Purgatories, one for the guilty, and one for the guiltless; the latter is to develop and bring into active life the germ, hidden and untried; it is the providential test of this human material to show whether it be fit to be put into the divine temple. Hermione is one who has stood the test; she has the spirit which can wait and endure, till the supreme Orderer comes to her aid and supplements her patience with His power.

This play has been connected, especially by Mr. Furnivall, with the experience of Shakespeare's later life. His return to Stratford after the long absence in London, his reconciliation with his wife, his repentance and her forgiveness may possibly be reflected in the parts of Leontes and Hermione. Moreover a bond of

renewed love may be found in the Poet's daughter, the Perdita of Stratford. Also, there is a fresh delight in country life and rural customs — the sheep-shearing, the gardening, the flowers, the natural scenery. Nobody pretends to find an exact parallel between the drama and the events of Shakespeare's life; but unquestionably he writes and must write from his own experience; as Göethe says, the Poet has to give poetic form to the world of reality. These personal matters cannot be told directly; a story must be found into which they are woven; that story had lain dormant many years in the Poet's mind; of a sudden it began to sprout and bloom, and bear fruit in this drama.

It has already been said that Shakespeare derived his materials from a cotemporary novel by Robert Greene, called *Pandosto, The Triumph of Time*, first published in 1588. It went through many editions and must have been familiar to Shakespeare's audience. It probably was known to the Poet almost a quarter of a century, quite the whole period of his literary career, before he put his hand to dramatizing it, before he was really ready to employ it aright. In that time the novel underwent the grand transformation which we see in the drama, and which reflects great changes in the Poet's own soul. It is called by Greene himself the Triumph of Time, by which he means that through "sinister fortune

Truth may be concealed, yet by Time in spite of fortune it is most manifestly revealed." Thus to Greene's mind Time was shown in the novel correcting accident through accident. But Shakespeare will take the story and fill it with an inner mediation; long-suffering will vindicate innocence, repentance will undo wrong. Thus the novel becomes a true triumph of Time, and is transfigured into a spiritual history.

How does he do it? Let us follow the process and see. The central fact is that Shakespeare turns Greene's novel, which is tragic, into a comedy or mediated drama. Both Hermione (Bellaria) and Leontes (Pandosto) perish in the novel; the world of mediation is essentially unknown to Greene. The wife breaks down under her trials, when her boy Garinter (Mamillius) dies; she has not sufferance, which saves herself, her husband, her world. Still, the novelist dwells upon her purity, nay, he speaks of her patience, but it bears no fruit in his work, it is not the triumphant patience of the Poet. In like manner Leontes shows repentance in Greene's book, but it is not that complete undoing of guilt which bridges the great chasm and brings restoration of wife, child, and world. Through these two ideas — the repentance of the husband and the long-suffering of the wife — the whole play is changed into a purgatorial discipline, with the outlook of salvation; the two characters are me-

diated and brought back even into their secular existence.

Another inference may be drawn at this point: Shakespeare must have made this change intentionally. He had known the novel many years doubtless, and had clearly seen what it lacked for his purpose. He had to alter and reject what lay before him; that certainly demands a conscious procedure. He puts an idea into the novel which it has not previously had, and makes out of that his drama; such an act requires that he knows what he is doing. He is not wholly the child of instinct then; he makes distinctions which reveal him as the self-conscious artist. A comparison of his completed drama with its sources gives us a peep into his mind, which we see working by a plan and an idea.

In general, the novel suggests structure, incident and personages. It has, in the first place, the three structural movements — the Separation through Wrong, the Idyllic Realm, the Return. Yet Bohemia and Sicilia are inverted; the novelist makes the former the civilized, and the latter the pastoral land. This change too was dictated by judgment. Bohemia is still used as a sort of type for what is romantic, fantastic, free of civilized restraints; it is a Gypsy World full of fable, wonder and adventure. Sicilia belongs far more in the stream of civilization; it is also historically connected with the Delphic oracle and

furnishes the Greek setting for the drama. Here again, the Poet consciously made a change, and we have to seek the reason. In Greene, moreover, this structural division seems to fall quite asunder; Shakespeare has jointed the three movements, and has, doubtless, fully overcome the difficulty, though it be still hard for some people to pass the chasm between the Real and the Idyllic Worlds (Third to Fourth Act).

In the second place the incidents are pretty much the same in novel and drama, though these incidents too are transformed and speak a new speech. Still, very important matters are introduced by the Poet — especially those connected with the changed destinies of Hermione and Leontes, who, we must recollect, perish in the novel, but are saved in the drama.

In the third place, the main characters are suggested in the novel, but their names are wholly changed. This, too, is with design; they are not the same, but are filled with new life, and transferred into a new world. Shakespeare was aware of what he had done, though others might accuse him of literary theft. If Robert Greene had been living when this drama was played, he would probably again have complained that the upstart was "beautified with our feathers." Several important characters were added by the Poet—Paulina, Antigonus, Autolycus. In all

these matters we mark the wonderful transformation which is described by Ariel:

> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

Though the novel is the direct source, this drama has its roots far back in the ages, whose mythical treasures it bears in its bosom. We have noticed the classic setting in locality and names, but in spirit it is romantic. The play is manifestly a child of Renascence, but not now in revolt against Christendom, but in a return toward the same; the new Hellenism is again Christianized in its greatest poet. Moreover, it is polymythical; we behold a Greek story transformed into a Gothic fairy-tale, with features of both strangely remaining; there breathes through it the pastoral fragrance of Southern poetry, with an Italian intrigue of love and disguise; then there is the hearty English comedy of humble life. All mythologies have rendered up their spoils to the true singer, to whom they belong by divine right, inasmuch as they, otherwise refractory, find their harmonious place in his song. Greek, Gothic, Italian, English story is transfused into one world-embracing myth, which again images in a new form the mightiest fact of an epoch.

CYMBELINE.

The present drama is usually called a tragedy, and is printed under this head in the First Folio. But the prevalent spirit of it is mediatorial, though two of its characters perish. It is as much of a comedy as *Winter's Tale*, in which also two characters perish. It belongs to Shakespeare's latest period, which is that of repentance and reconciliation, and in which he, a child of the Renascence, shows a strong reaction against its paganism toward the Christian view of the world. Yet, the poetic dress is heathen and secular rather than religious. In fact, the very movement of these later dramas is the movement of the Renascence. The miserable condition of the political and ecclesiastical world, with its wrong, tyranny, poisoning and assassination, especially in Italy, helped to bring about the flight to an ideal, poetic existence in pagan culture and freedom, which had already portrayed idyllic life and the Golden Age. This, however, was unreal and could not last; there was a return to and reconciliation with Christendom, the spiritual nature of which had been purified and deepened by its

trial. Thus the Renascence has in it essentially the threefold movement—the Breach, the Flight, the Return; this spiritual movement of the Age is also in the Poet's life and in his dramas, reaching the fullest fruitage in his final epoch.

This play has another characteristic, which is seen most fully in his last period, the tendency to the spectacular. We notice the same development in Goethe, whose latest work tends more to spectacular fullness and breadth than to dramatic concentration and intensity. Yet in both poets the spectacle is not a mere empty show bedazzling the senses, and appealing to vague wonder, but it has an inner subtle thought which lies under rather than in the superficial appearance. In fact, both poets, in what may be regarded as their last productions—in *Tempest* and in the *Second Part of Faust*—unfold this spectacular element to its ultimate point of completeness, filling it with an inner meaning which places both these dramas in the sphere of conscious symbolism.

As regards the materials of this play, Shakespeare has woven three, if not four different kinds together. Again, we should note his polymythical procedure; not one legend or fact of one age or nation, but several legends or facts of several nations he unites into his work. Ancient Rome and ancient Britain, modern Italy and modern

England stand side by side, at last representing one great fact in the World's History.

The first kind of material is the historical, telling of the conflict between ancient Rome and ancient Britain; hints for which the Poet drew from his much-used chronicler Holinshed. Cymbeline is said to have become King of Britain in 33 B. C.; he had two sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, whose names are given by Holinshed, but the Poet and not the Chronicler tells their strange story. Augustus Cæsar and Cymbeline, the civilized and the barbarous world, form the background of conflict.

The second kind of material is not historical, but novelistic; its scene is transferred from ancient Rome to modern Rome, where the tale of the bet is located. Its chief incidents are found in Boccaccio, but the subject was a popular one, and can be traced far back in the literature of medieval Europe, especially in French sources. In fact, the suggestion of it is almost as old as Rome itself, and mounts up to the time of Tarquin, when, at the siege of Ardea, the Roman nobles laid a wager on the worth of their wives, and gave the palm to the chaste Lucrece. That story has in it the bet and the ravisher, and is tragic; it is also inwoven with important political consequences, like the present story. We should note, too, that the tale of Lucrece fascinated

the Poet in his younger days, to the extent of bringing him to write a poem upon this theme. But the ancient Lucrece perishes, while the modern one not only mediates herself, but also her assailant.

The third kind of material is the story of the stealing of the babes, who are princes. This element is not like that of the novel or of history; it touches the fairy-tale, and we think of Gothic Mythology. It is said that no source has been discovered for this portion of the drama; but the Poet had only to draw upon his own store of tradition heard at the fireside. The stealing of infant princes is not an uncommon incident in the fairy world; in it, too, we are often brought to the forest, and to the mountain, the primitive wonderland of Teutonic folk-lore (see Grimm's Tales, *passim*). The theft of the royal babes and the flight to the primeval forest, reach down to the first sources of all literature of the North, probably of the human race.

The three material elements of the play, therefore, reflect man in three supreme relations. The historic part suggests a great political conflict in the world's movement; the part of the Novel portrays the social and domestic conflict of an advanced stage of society; the Marvelous Tale shows man in the twilight of his primitive existence, and his first struggles in getting out of that border-land of mystery. A picture of all civiliz-

ation in three phases we may see dashed off here in rapid yet truthful outline.

To these three elements we may add a fourth, the English humor in the comic scenes, particularly in those connected with Cloten, the noble moon-calf in the plot, taking the place commonly given to the clown. Yet all the play is at bottom English, into which the foreign elements have been transfused with a thorough poetic harmony.

The relation in which this play stands to *Winter's Tale* is very intimate, and it is evident that both were constructed after one pattern. There is the same disregard of external probability, the same mingling of Pagan and Christian customs, the same defiance of the facts of History and Chronology. The main pathos in each play belongs to female characters, and is the same, namely, devotion of the wife to the Family under the most trying circumstances. Yet the surroundings and incidents are quite different: Hermione is mother as well as wife, Imogen is the young bride. The difficulties of the former come from the husband alone; the difficulties of the latter come at first from her parents, and then from her husband. The structure of the two works is also similar: Both are mediated dramas, in which a tragic collision finds reconciliation; the earnest theme is brought to a happy conclusion, and, hence, they cannot be classed under pure Tragedy, or pure Comedy.

There is also introduced an idyllic realm, in distinction from the court and civilized society, which is the chief instrumentality in restoring the injured and overcoming the wrong of the State. Repentance, too, is made the spiritual ground of the reconciliation of the offenders, though it has not quite so lengthened a development in *Cymbeline* as in *Winter's Tale*. The resemblance in thought and structure is, therefore, very decided; still, the setting of each play, the incidents and characters, are altogether different. The two plays are very near each other in time; no body can tell which comes first in the order of the Poet's works.

The entire action, as usual, will be divided into three parts or movements, The first movement portrays the world of conflict and disruption, which has its center at the court of Cymbeline. Family and State are in a condition of strife and wrong; the union of Posthumus and Imogen, representing the Family, has to endure a double collision — from within and from without; Britain, representing the State, is involved in a war with a foreign power. This movement, therefore, exhibits struggle and contradiction on all sides; because of such a condition of things there will necessarily result a flight from the world of institutions to a primitive life. Hence, we pass to the second movement, which is the Idyllic Realm — the land of peace and harmony, in-

habited by hunters, and far removed from the conflicts of the time. But this narrow existence will disintegrate from within, and will be swallowed up in the conflict from without. The third movement, therefore, is the Restoration, involving the repentance of those who are guilty, the return of those who have been wrongfully banished — in general, the harmony of all collisions of Family and State.

I.

The first movement will unfold the threads giving the domestic and the political conflict. Britain has passed into a period of discord and struggle in its two great institutions — Family and State, showing a diseased condition of the social organism, which has to be subjected to a restorative process.

1. The preliminary fact of the action is the love and marriage of Posthumus and Imogen. It is in the highest degree a rational union; the characters of husband and wife seem just fitted for each other. Moral worth, strong emotion, intellectual gifts, are all present. Posthumus has been instructed in every kind of knowledge; he is also endowed with the fairest exterior and noblest manners. But that which he lacks is a long line of high-born ancestry, though his father and brothers had rendered the most im-

portant services to their country — in fact, his entire family had perished, directly or indirectly, in its defense, and he had been left an orphan. This untitled origin, then, is the sole ground of objection to him; the play emphasizes the conflict between birth and intelligence. Imogen, the daughter of the king, has chosen him in preference to the degraded and half-witted nobleman, Cloten, against the will of her father and against the plans of her step-mother. Her choice, however, meets with the secret, but unanimous, approval of the courtiers. Now, to break this union so true and so deep, the most powerful instrumentalities are brought forward in the course of the play. But particularly the wife, Imogen, is subjected to the sorest trials, and passes through them in triumph — nothing can undermine her devotion. Here we see the inherent necessity for the restoration and final union of the pair, since the Family reposing on so deep and rational a basis cannot be destroyed without violence both to thought and to our most sacred emotions, in fact without undermining the ethical order of the world.

(*a.*) Against the marriage of Posthumus and Imogen there is a double assault, giving what may be named the external and internal collisions. These two phases manifest all the possible forms of conflict with the Family. The first phase will exhibit the external collision, in which there is an

an attempt to destroy the union of the married pair by force — by violent separation. Three persons of consequence are engaged in the undertaking — Cymbeline, the Queen, and Cloten. Cymbeline, the father of Imogen and King of the land, has fallen completely under the influence of his Queen, who is his second wife. At her instigation he has forbidden the marriage of his daughter with Posthumus, and is ready to force the pair asunder. It is a phase of the Poet's frequent theme — the collision between the will of the parent and the choice of the child. Cymbeline is a weak King — arbitrary, uxorious, mistaking caprice for royal will. He is largely determined by his outer world at the start and at the end; in the one case he is wicked, tyrannous, revengeful; in the other one, he is soft and forgiving, in harmony with his environment.

The Queen, however, is the lever of the whole action, and her great object is, to place her son upon the throne. She is the perfection of cunning and ambition. The easiest way of attaining her end is to marry her son, Cloten, to Imogen, the heiress of the realm; but if this plan does not succeed, she is ready for the secret poisoning of all obnoxious individuals. In the use of deadly drugs she has already had some experience, and she declares that the King himself will be put out of the way if necessary. Still, Imogen understands her dissimulation, and with the greatest

firmness resists all attempts to break the marriage. The Queen is truly the villain of the play, and assails the subsisting ethical relations.

Cloten, her son, is the type of the brutalized nobleman, indulging in every species of degrading amusement. He is the designed contrast to Posthumus in all respects; a rational union with him is impossible — at least to a woman of the character of Imogen. Braggart, overbearing, a low gamester, he yet possesses a brute courage; intellectually he is a fool. Still, he aspires to the hand of Imogen, and presses his suit with great pertinacity, being supported by both King and Queen. The result is, however, that he is rejected with firmness, even with insult. These are the three persons who assail the marriage; in the very beginning of the play Posthumus has to flee, being banished by the King; Imogen, the wife, is left alone to withstand the anger of her father, the machinations of her step-mother, and the rude courtship of Cloten. This she does in the most heroic manner, aided and comforted by a servant, Pisanio, who is a leading mediatorial character of the drama. His character is devotion to the pair — fidelity under the most trying difficulties. Forced by the stress of circumstances, he will be faithless to everybody else in order to be faithful to his master and mistress. As he himself puts the twofoldness of his char-

acter: "Wherein I am false, I am honest; not true, to be true."

(*b.*) With the departure of Posthumus the separation is accomplished; external force has disrupted the members of the Family. Still, they are one in emotion, though far apart in space. Now comes the internal collision—the bond of emotion which unites husband and wife is to be assailed. This assault, if successful, must destroy the foundation of marriage, which is based upon the fidelity of each party. Let either man or wife be brought to believe that the other is untrue, the emotional unity upon which the Family reposes is destroyed. The character whose function it is to undermine their reciprocal love is Iachimo. He is incited to his act by the wager of Posthumus, who thus shows both his confidence and his folly. The scene in Philario's house at Rome, where the bet is made, is not without offensive features, but its necessity is manifest — it motives this assault upon the internal unity of the Family. Moreover, the affair has its truth to-day; such a wager is still laid by the libertine against the honor of woman, and is sought by every device to be won. The nationality of Iachimo is repeatedly emphasized; he is the crafty, Italian who utterly disregards all ethical principles. First, he comes to Britain and assails the chastity of Imogen. He begins with casting suspicion upon the fidelity of Posthumus

at Rome. The latter, he says, is jolly, laughs at lover's sighs, ridicules devotion, attacks the character of woman, and, to complete his transgressions, is untrue to his marriage vow. Imogen wavers for a moment in her confidence. Iachimo thinks it is the favorable moment; he urges her to take revenge upon her husband by being untrue also, and offers himself as the means. But revenge is not her principle; she not only hwarts, but at once detects his purpose, and is on the point of having him seized, when he succeeds in gaining her confidence a second time by an artful apology, as well as by extravagant laudation of Posthumus. The assault upon Imogen has, therefore, failed; her confidence in her husband is unimpaired; the wily Italian has not succeeded in destroying the union in her bosom.

Next comes the assault upon Posthumus. Let us see how he stands the trial. Iachimo returns to Rome; the trick of concealment in the chest has furnished him with certain kinds of evidence, which he employs to the best advantage. No doubt the chain of suspicious circumstances was very strong; it convinces the impartial Philario, but it ought not to have convinced a husband who was very partial towards his wife, and who firmly rested on the belief in her fidelity. But Posthumus hastily yields the wager, and concludes that his wife has lost her chastity — a conclusion of which he afterwards bitterly repents. Post-

humus, in his anguish, turns against all womankind, and reproaches them with infidelity; he does not even spare his own mother, and thus casts the suspicion of illegitimacy upon himself. This is, however, only carrying misogyny to its necessary conclusion — a universal slander of woman returns to the calumniator.

Thus Iachimo succeeds with the husband, though he has failed with the wife; as regards Posthumus, the confidence upon which the Family reposes is destroyed. He is even ready to murder his wife, and gives instructions to that effect to Pisanio. But the latter again is false in order to be true; he disregards the wicked command of his master, and is faithful to the ethical relation of the pair. Imogen now leaves the court of her father and directs her journey to Milford Haven, where she hopes to see her husband. On the way Pisanio tells her the dreadful secret: her husband has lost confidence in her fidelity. The fact is now revealed to her that their union is destroyed in the bosom Posthumus. She, too, momentarily turns against the fidelity of men; her passionate utterance is: "Men's vows are women's traitors." She also begs Pisanio to execute his commission; death is preferable to the loss of union. But Pisanio has not lost confidence in the integrity of his master; and he, the skillful mediator, proposes still to save the Family, though its members despair. He tells

her that she must disguise herself and takes service with the Roman Lucius till she find out the truth concerning her husband. Imogen accedes; for it is her deepest principle to maintain the union — to be true to the Family through all adversity.

Thus we behold the bond of union between Posthumus and Imogen in almost complete disruption — suspended, as it were, by a single thread. First, external violence separated husband and wife — Posthumus has to leave the court, and Imogen remains behind. Then comes the internal attack, which aims at undermining their emotional unity. With Imogen it fails, but succeeds with Posthumus; and, finally, the wife becomes aware of the alienation of the husband. Such are what were before called the external and internal collisions of the Family. Only Imogen remains faithful to the union, though assailed from without and from within. The beauty of her character lies in this devotion to the highest principle of her sex. Against parent, against the most powerful enemies, and, finally, against the very husband who rejects her, does she assert her unconquerable fidelity to the Family, and in the end saves it from destruction.

2. The second thread of this movement is the conflict between the two States, though it is much less prominent than the first thread. Britain has

ceased to pay tribute to Rome, an embassador is sent to demand it; the refusal of Britain causes war to be declared. It is national independence against foreign subjugation. The King announces the right of revolt, and asserts the duty of maintaining the ancient laws of the land. But the chief instigator and active supporter of the rebellion is the Queen; without her strong will the weak King could not have been brought to undertake such an enterprise. It must be said that her conduct in this case is not only defensible, but noble; she appears as the champion of nationality against the greatest power in the world. Even Cloten is arrayed on the same side — not from any merit in him, perhaps, but through the influence of his mother. Her motive was doubtless selfish; she wanted to possess absolute authority for herself and for her son as successor to the crown. Still, it is in itself a noble ambition to desire to rule over a free country.

Here occurs the great jar to our ethical feeling which has always been noticeable in this play, notwithstanding its power and beauty. The wicked Queen, who, on the one hand, assails the Family in its loftiest and purest manifestations, on the other hand vindicates the State, the highest ethical institution of man. What, therefore, is to be her fate? She ought not to live — she ought not to die; she is a contradiction which runs through the entire play and

blasts its effect. Nor can she be called strictly a tragic character, which goes down in the conflict of institutions, for her support of the State in no way necessitates her hostility to the Family. To the class of villains she rather belongs — those whose nature is to defy all ethical principles, though her selfishness drives her to maintain one — the State. We feel the discord, the double trend of her character, from this time forward. The Poet undoubtedly seeks to condemn her as the enemy of the true marital relation; but, then, on the other side, she stands the main supporter of national independence. When it is added that the drama ends with undoing the whole work of the Queen — that not only the sundered pair are restored to one another, but also Britain returns to the Roman allegiance, and thus nationality is destroyed — we can see how deep is the violence done to the feelings of an audience — especially of a British audience. This play has never been popular, compared with most of Shakespeare's pieces, and never can be, for the reasons just given. Rarely in his other works has the Poet left so great a discord in his Ethical World.

II.

We are now ready to pass out of this realm of conflict to the second movement, which is the Idyllic Land. The Poet has here introduced a

new variety of inhabitants, namely the hunters, corresponding to the shepherds of *Winter's Tale* and *As You Like It*. Still they are quite different. The pastoral life of those dramas is placid, unambitious, while this life of the bold huntsmen is full of energy, adventure, aspiration; they cannot be restrained, they long for experience, for the deed. The one set seems to derive their character from the tame sheep which they herd, the other from the wild animals which they hunt. Belarius has sought in this idyllic realm to build up the perverted and effete society which drove him away, by a new education, by a primitive training close to nature. The Hunter World dissolves, not through love however, like the other idyllic realms portrayed in Shakespeare, but through the mighty longing of the youths to know what is beyond the narrow limits of such an existence. But the transitions are not decided; this world is not marked off so plainly here as in the plays just mentioned. It is mingled with foreign elements, which run along with it on the outside, as if to cover up its naked joints. The Poet breaks off describing it, in the middle, and passes to the court of Cymbeline, and he also introduces into it the Roman thread. The outlines of the Hunter World are, therefore, by no means so distinct and separate in the play as might be expected from other works. Still, it constitutes an essential element of the action;

it performs also the function of mediation; its character, too, is thoroughly idyllic, and it causes the present play to be ranked with the ideal class of mediated dramas.

1. The Hunter World is the contrast to the court, and logically springs from the latter, which has become intolerable as the abode of man; in fact, the Poet has made it the direct product of the King's injustice. Many years before the time of the present action, Cymbeline wrongfully condemned Belarius, a nobleman who had done great services to the State; he flies from society and calls into existence this Hunter World. But he also steals and takes along two children, sons of the King. These three persons now compose this world. The boys are grown up to manhood; are ignorant, however, of their royal origin. The country is mountainous, their house is a cave, their clothing is made of skins, their food is derived from the chase. The old man, Belarius, whom they take to be their father, is full of the praises of their wild existence, and utters much detraction of the court; he has even a natural religion — the worship of the sun. But the young men are anxious to go forth and know more of life; the very dissuasion of Belarius has excited their intense desire of experience. So at the beginning we notice the seeds of dissolution in the Hunter World.

It is manifest, therefore, that this realm is

both the contrast and product of the court of Cymbeline. Belarius, driven away by injustice, has created a world of his own — or, rather, has returned to a primitive, natural life, as opposed to a concrete, social existence. Such ideal realms are the natural fruit of a disordered society. Suspicion, intrigue, flattery, wrong, are triumphant at court; but among the hunters are found simplicity, honesty, true bravery, united with a manly independence. It is a condition of peace; of narrow, idyllic activity; a free life, in which the individual, harassed by social collisions, gladly takes refuge — in imagination if not in reality.

Imogen, fleeing from the court, comes to its opposite — this idyllic land — and is most kindly received by its inhabitants. The inner, spontaneous feeling of kinship which springs up between her and her brothers, though wholly unknown to one another, is one of the most beautiful situations of the play; in fact, they unwittingly declare their very relationship. But the transition from a civilized state to such rough life is a hard one; poor Imogen falls ill, and takes some of the Queen's drug, whose effect, however, is merely to produce a long sleep. But the innocent hunters think that she is dead, and we have her burial ceremonies portrayed. It is the primitive view of death; a cheerful religion of nature breathes through their utterances; their love is manifested by the floral decorations sup-

plied immediately from the soil. This is apparently only the second time that they have seen death; their supposed mother, Euriphile, had died before among them. Their chief rite is the song, whose theme is that death frees man from all the finite struggles of existence. The conflicts both of Nature and Spirit are then settled. The internal necessity of this burial scene is not apparent, inasmuch as the death of Imogen is only fictitious. But it gives fullness and beauty to the portrait of idyllic life. It shows, too, how the hate of the real world pursued Imogen to her humble place of refuge, and the striking contrast in the treatment of her by the hunters and by the parents.

The second arrival from the court in this idyllic land is that of Cloten. The pursuit of Imogen has led him hither. His design is to inflict upon the poor fugitive the most brutal outrage, and drag her back to her angry parents. The wretch meets the elder of the brothers, begins to treat him as if he were one of the servile courtiers, and addresses him in a most insulting manner. The work is short— Cloten's head is cut off in a trice. It was only the court and civilized society which could protect such a monster. In this realm of nature birth conveys no privilege, unless supplemented by other endowments. But observe the contrast between these two adversaries: Cloten, the probable successor of the

throne hitherto, is slain by the true heir, one who possesses, not only the royal blood, but the royal character. The Poet has taken pains to portray Guiderius, the elder of the two boys, as animated with the worthy spirit of his high lineage. The aristocracy of birth is shown on its good and bad side in these two personages — in the degraded nobleman, Cloten, and in the generous and high-spirited Guiderius, whose humble life has not extinguished the spark of his royal origin.

Such is the fate of Cloten in this idyllic world. He is laid by the hunters alongside of Imogen. She wakes and sees the headless trunk with her husband's clothes on; she thinks that it is Posthumus, and that he is dead. Pisanio is accused by her of treachery; the last one who was faithful seems to have turned false. It is the culmination of her trials; the object of her life is gone; the unity of marriage appears now impossible. She has endured the external and the internal disruption, and still did not despair; here is the final stroke. In a swoon she falls upon the corpse.

2. The second thread also is introduced into this Hunter Land, namely, the collision between the Roman and British states. It necessarily swallows up the idyllic realm, which has always a tendency to return to society. The battle-ground is in the neighborhood of the hunters' territory — that is, the latter cannot be wholly withdrawn from the conflict of the nation. Lu-

cius, the Roman general, finds Imogen lying upon the supposed body of her lover; she revives, and makes the best of her situation by entering his service as a page. The means of return is thus provided for her; suicide she cannot commit, on account of her moral nature.

But the Hunter World dissolves now within itself. The germ of its dissolution was noticed before; the two young men are dissatisfied with their narrow sphere of action when they have discovered that there is another world beyond, of which they know nothing. They hear the noise of the conflict round about them. The old man, Belarius, with the bitter remembrance of his wrong, wishes to go higher up the mountain, out of the way; he desires still to preserve his idyllic realm. But the youths cannot be restrained; their thirst for activity is so great that they have come to prefer death to their present condition. They descend, therefore, into the plain to participate in the struggle of nationality, and the old warrior, Belarius, cannot stay behind. Thus the Hunter World vanishes, being disrupted, from within and disturbed from without. The civilized State must show itself stronger than such a narrow, abstract existence. These hunters will now return; the Roman war is the means. They must on the one hand be restored to the State, and the State on the other hand must make it possible for them to live under its protection — must free itself from wrong and contradiction.

III.

Next comes the third movement — the Restoration — which will bring all the separated and colliding elements of Britain into harmony. The external means for accomplishing this purpose has already been stated to be the war with Rome. Connected with it, in one way or another, are all the characters for whom reconciliation is prepared. The battle takes place; the Romans are at first victorious, but are afterwards beaten back and defeated by the three hunters, aided by Posthumus. Thus the idyllic land has been the instrumentality of saving the King; his own courtiers and soldiers have degenerated into cowards. The indignant speech of Posthumus to a British lord shows to what pass the courage of the nation has come under the rule of Cymbeline; the fresh, independent spirit of the mountains rescues the country. The Roman commander is taken prisoner, together with Imogen; all the persons to be restored are collected in the tent of the British King.

The battle, being only an external instrumentality, is of minor importance; hence the Poet does not dwell upon it, but has it pass before our eyes rapidly in the form of pantomime. The point, however, which is of the highest significance is the internal ground for the return and salvation of the different characters. They who

have done wrong can be saved only through Repentance; they must as far as possible make their deed undone. There are at least three persons who manifest contrition for their conduct — Posthumus, Iachimo, and the King. But the worst character of the play, the Queen, will not, or cannot, repent; at least her repentance is of that kind which does not purchase reconciliation, for she

> "Repented
> The evils she hatched were not effected; so,
> Despairing, died."

Her violation of the ethical world has taken such deep possession of her nature that it could not be cast off — renunciation of ambition and crime means death. The step-mother in this play can not be mediated; she conspires against and assails her step-daughter, Imogen, who is, moreover, the great mediatorial character; thus she destroys her own means of salvation.

The first of the repentants is Posthumus. He supposes that his order to kill Imogen has been fulfilled by Pisanio; he is full of the deepest tribulation for his hasty action. Though he is not yet aware of the innocence of Imogen, he nevertheless repents of his command; for thus she has not had the opportunity to repent. He courts death; he would gladly offer up his own life as an atonement for his deed. Repentance can go no further. When the individual is

ready to sacrifice his existence, what more can he give? Posthumus seeks death from both Romans and Britons; but his wish is not fulfilled — he still lives. It is evident that he has made his deed undone as far as lies in his power; the sorrow within and the action without indicate the deepest repentance. In two lengthy speeches he is introduced as giving expression to his contrite feelings. Reconciliation must be prepared for such a soul — it is a necessary logical consequence.

The character of Posthumus passes through a great development: he has at first an outer fickleness and impulsiveness, but when he comes to himself he shows his deep inward honesty and stability. The bad company at Rome seems to have called out his weak traits; his impetuous mistake is to have made the wager, which could expose himself to deception, and his wife to annoyance if not to temptation. He receives the penalty, he is deceived by circumstantial evidence, loses confidence in his wife, and hastily orders her to be slain. Thus his trait is now vengeance; in a fit of jealousy, like Othello, he will slay the dearest object of his heart. He will also involve in his own guilt his faithful servant, Pisanio, making the very fidelity of the latter, into a means of crime. In these things we see the weakness of Posthumus, and the necessity of his discipline; he is sudden, impulsive, and vengeful in his passion. But we must not forget the good

side of the man, which is the ground of his restoration; it is love which drives him to jealousy—he shows no infidelity, no unchastity, but he has in his blindness revenge and not charity.

Time, however, will work a change; this takes place in the interval between the Second and Fifth Acts, during which he disappears. He repents of both of his deeds toward Imogen and Pisanio. Not that he thinks she is guiltless — he repents that he has not given her time to repent. Disguised as a peasant, he will fight for his country, or rather for her country, since she is always in his mind as the supreme object. Though he vanquishes and disarms Iachimo, he cannot slay the latter, as he is the cause of his own misfortune. He welcomes death and bondage, but can not die or be taken; his repentance is to bring restoration. Thus he goes through his discipline; no longer vengeance but charity is now his soul's strongest impulse. He is to show himself a second Providence and suffer the wicked to repent; so he grants life to Iachimo. If he had thus acted at the beginning, he would not have had this trial; even if Imogen had been guilty he should have had charity. He may now be said to be in harmony with the divine order, into which he must, after repentance, be accepted.

Here the Poet might stop, for he has amply motived the reunion of Posthumus with Imogen, which will hereafter take place. But he

has chosen to go further, and to give a detailed representation of the above-mentioned reconciliation in another form — to present a literal image of the repentant soul harmonizing itself with the rational principle of the Universe. Posthumus falls asleep and dreams; his dream is of forgiveness. He sees his father, mother, and brothers interceding for him with Jupiter — greatest of the gods — who grants their prayer. The restoration to Imogen is promised, and also release from affliction. It is but a dream, yet it shows his state of mind, and intimates his internal absolution. He wakes again; doubt and sorrow assail him; again he sighs for death. But the reality soon comes to confirm the vision; he is reconciled with his father-in-law, Cymbeline, and restored to his wife, Imogen, not without another flash of impulse, however, in which he gives her, before she is recognized, a cruel blow of which he has again to repent.

This passage, including the dream of Posthumus and his conversation with the jailors, has often been condemned for its manifold defects, and sometimes declared not to be the work of the Poet. That its literary merit falls below the average literary merit of Shakespearian composition is hardly to be denied; that it is not strictly necessary to the development of the action is also true, since the repentance already manifested by Posthumus logically involves

restoration. The example of the Poet may also be cited, for, though he has often employed Repentance in other dramas, he has nowhere introduced such an intercession of divinity to secure its results. Still, even if it be not absolutely requisite for the action, the plea may be made in its favor that it gives an imaginative completeness to the mediation. Deity is introduced in person, manifesting grace for repentance. It is thus the most profound Christian doctrine in a heathen dress, and this dress is taken, instead of the real Christian dress, for the purpose of avoiding the charge of blasphemy. To bring God upon the stage, pardoning the repentant sinner, would be a pretty hazardous undertaking, and would not have escaped, it is likely, the deletion of the censor's pen in the Poet's time. Such a liberty may be taken with an old, worn-out Greek divinity, though even this procedure is not strictly that of the drama, which should exhibit man as determined from within, and not from without. But the introduction of the tablet, with its prophetic inscription and its interpretation, is not only useless, but also ridiculous. The authorship of the entire passage, however, cannot well be taken away from Shakespeare, in the absence of positive testimony, though one may wish it were not his. It is also jointed too closely into the rest of the Act to pass for an external interpolation

The second of these repentants is Iachimo, who has been guilty of defaming a pure woman, and destroying the internal bond of union of the Family. He also has come with the Roman army; his first declaration is sorrow for his wrong. The main ground of his change seems to lie in the fact that he has lost his former valor; the guilty soul paralyzes the strong arm; he is vanquished by one who seems to him to be a mere peasant. Before the King and the entire company he confesses his deed, and, finally, asks for death at the hands of Posthumus, whom he has so deeply wronged. Thus his repentance has carried him to the point of a necessary reconciliation; he has offered for it the highest possible price, namely, his own life. At this price it can not be withheld — for how could his punishment obtain more? The character of Iachimo, as well as that of Posthumus, is not tragic; their complete repentance, going so far as to make a voluntary sacrifice of their own existence for their misdeeds, forestalls the tragic end, since the latter, at most, could exhibit their lives taken for their guilt. Repentance is the mind's sacrifice;' it is the individual sitting in judgment upon his own act, and condemning himself, even to death. Such a decision, however, should not destroy the rigid and upright judge who makes it. But a system of external justice can by no means be regulated by this purely internal element.

Iachimo also shows a great development in the course of the play. He starts as the seducer and traducer with all the brilliant insinuating charms of sunny, snaky Italy. It is clear that he has had, during his life, no experience of the true woman. He tries his wiles, he seeks to undermine Imogen's faith in her husband's fidelity, then whispers that Italian word, vengeance, in her ear: Do thou as he does. But he mistakes; her principle is not revenge; thus she is not only safe from his cunning, but detects his plot. Still he has craft enough to wind out of his detection, which he does chiefly by turning the blame of her husband into praise, wherein he subtly touches a wifely weakness. But Iachimo is never afterwards quite the same man. Imogen, unconsciously, has dealt him a blow between the eyes which makes him reel; he must change his view of woman, and with that change another change begins — a reformation, gradual, but sure. We recollect that he calls her, not to her face, but to himself, "fresh lily" and "heavenly angel" — words which he never spoke of woman before. The great transformation of the man takes place between the Second and Fifth Acts, parallel to that of Posthumus, who conquers him in the external combat as well as in the internal conflict between their spirits since, "the heaviness and guilt within my bosom takes off my manhood — I have belied a lady." Iachimo recalls Iago in

name, character and nationality. The jealous Posthumus suggests Othello; the use of external evidence for proof of the wife's guilt is similar in both cases, and is used to rouse the same passion. But the villainy of Iago and the jealousy of the Moor are overcome in the present play by the wife; both characters repent and are saved; the tragedy of *Othello* is thus mediated in the drama of *Cymbeline*, and the woman has become the grand mediatrix of the tragic world — no longer a helpless fate-embraced Desdemona. Still we feel some hesitancy about receiving Iachimo, he is the one unforgivable by mortals, but not by God and by Shakespeare. A repentant, restored Iago — look at him!

The King also repents of his conduct toward Imogen, and is reconciled with Belarius. Thus his two great acts of wrong are undone; the two deeds which disrupted his family — one of them causing the loss of his sons, the other the loss of his daughter — are recalled. The result is, sons and daughter are restored to him, and his family is once more united. But not only the Family, but also the State, is restored from its internal disruption. The Hunter World is reconciled with it, and no longer separates from it — creating a distinct realm. Even in the external conflict Britain is successful against the Romans; but the King voluntarily surrenders his victory and again becomes the vassal of Rome. The ob-

ject is, no doubt, to undo entirely the work of the wicked Queen, who was the chief instigator of the revolt, even to the extent of throwing away national independence. It has already been said that to make this detestable woman the heroine of her country's freedom was a jar to our ethical feeling; but to reject that freedom because it was achieved by a wicked person seems to grate even more harshly upon the sentiment of nationality. The management of the part of the Queen must be declared to be unfortunate — it is, indeed, the chief defect of the drama.

The favorite person of the play is undoubtedly Imogen, who is held by many to be the finest female character in Shakespeare. Her love is the driving wheel of the action, and draws into its movement the whole order of things. Gervinus has said that next to Hamlet she is the most elaborate delineation of the Poet. Upon none of his characters has Shakespeare poured such vials of affliction; to none has he given a more unswerving fealty to the best self in the hour of trial. She is the self-centered soul, not determined to revenge by wrong, but to the greater activity and charity; her duty rests not upon another's conduct, but upon itself; her love depends not even upon her lover's love, but is its own unfailing fountain. Can she be shaken? The Poet has tried his best to break her down, but has not been able; he has heaped upon her

the heaviest burdens of life, yet, after a little stoop or swoon, she is on her feet again, erect as ever. She is quite the sum of his conflicts, yet she meets them all, and mediates most of the colliding persons of the play, who seem to require her restorative hand.

A short summary of these conflicts may be given as they have been already unfolded. First, with her father, against whom she asserts the right of love; second, with the step-mother, who, true to her traditional character, is the real fury, pursuing her step-child even with poison; third, with the step-brother, the brutal and half-witted, seeking to be her husband; fourth, with the seducer and traducer; fifth, with her own husband, who seeks her death; sixth, with her faithful servant Pisanio, whom she for a while suspects of being false; seventh, she dies in appearance, to wake up and find her husband dead at her side in appearance, whereat she swoons, to wake up a second time and find herself a prisoner of war — but her death is a resurrection, and her swoon is a regeneration, and her captivity is her freedom; eighth, she accepts the inevitable, she has life on her hands still, though its purpose is lost in the loss of her husband. From the princess she has descended to the servant; but in the humblest position she is as complete as in the highest; the perfect princess becomes the perfect servant; lofty or low, she images perfection, and thus

reveals the divine in her life. "Duteous and nurse-like" is the praise bestowed upon her in her new calling, as she was before regal; in whatever sphere she is, fortune cannot stain her spirit's integrity, she beams forth the same perfect character in the kitchen and in the palace.

Thus she has stood her trial; she must be restored, else the Universe would fall to pieces; the ethical gravitation is far stronger and more necessary than the physical, in the Shakespearian cosmogeny. But she has become the center of the spiritual system; she draws and restores others who have been wayward and wanderers. Her integrity is what brings back into harmonious order her husband, her parent, even her tempter, the very devil. To be sure she is unconscious of doing all this, it lies far out of the horizon of her knowledge; still Providence is working with her, since his instrument is always just this integrity, which he supplies with his purpose. She has an inborn faith that the world is founded on goodness and will show it ultimately, if she persist herself in being good. Her mediatorial gift runs far beyond her conscious intention; she seems to combine two of Shakespeare's great women; she has the long-suffering of Hermione, coupled with the activity of Portia. Hermione, indeed, is somewhat passive; Portia is not called upon to endure, but to do; Imogen shows both supremely—the endurance and the deed.

Still we may notice foibles. She has momentary breaks, snatches of despair; but she soon recovers from them by the help of Pisanio. But even him, the faithful servant, she comes to suspect unjustly; still she rises and goes on by herself. We must notice her artifice, her disguises, yes, her downright fibbing upon occasion. She even defends herself to her conscience: "If I do lie, and do no harm by it, though the Gods hear, I hope they'll pardon it." A rigid, abstract morality is not hers, cannot be, in consistency with her mediatorial character. She even swears a little, for does she not say, to be sure under great provocation, "Damned Pisanio?" Unwillingly we tell on her—she says it twice.

This Pisanio is, from the start at least, the most perfect character of the play, though in a sphere more limited than Imogen, who weakens at points, thinks of giving up, even of committing suicide. It is Pisanio who calls her back and sees through the whole trouble: "It cannot be but that my master is abused; some villain hath done you both this cursed injury." He has the coolest head, he shows the best balance of all. We feel that Iachimo could not have wheedled him. Neither his fidelity nor his insight ever lapses, nor does impulse catch him unawares. Against his master, who bids him commit murder, he preserves his moral autonomy; he has a soul

of his own though he be a servant, which no authority can drive counter to its true being; he will not execute the wicked command, he is a spiritual aristocrat in his humble station. However small his sphere of life, in it he can be all and perfect. A curious fact of the play is this: not till Imogen, too, has become a servant, does her perfection shine out, and is she prepared for restoration to her high rank. Thus has the Poet ennobled the life of the humble, in a way that recalls the one who was born in a manger. But even Pisanio gets lost in the mazes of the time; master and mistress are whirled outside of his knowledge, and he "remains perplexed in all." Then his final appeal turns to Providence: "The heavens still must work." They do work and vindicate him, making good his faith. Again we see the providential order sweep in and take control the Shakespearian world.

The critics have not been very satisfactory in their views of this play. To determine its true nature has evidently given them great difficulty, and, as a consequence, they have employed to designate it certain high-sounding phrases, which, however, add very little to our knowledge. It has been called a dramatic novel, mainly on account of the supposed loose connection and the unwieldy number of its incidents and characters; it has also been called a dramatic Epos, chiefly because of the introduction of Jupiter in the last

Act. The idyllic element, too, has been declared to be foreign to the action and unusual in the drama. In general, this play is considered peculiar in its kind among the works of Shakespeare. But the Poet has elsewhere frequently employed epical elements, and to say that *Cymbeline* with all its variety is the most loosely connected of his plays is a hazardous statement. If the preceding analysis has been successful, it has shown that the drama before us has the same unity, the same fundamental thought, and the same essential structure as the other mediated dramas of the ideal class. Let the reader make the comparison, and he will find fundamentally the same general movement in all of them, and will have revealed to himself one of the essential principles of Shakespearian Art.

This play is peculiarly a play of regeneration, and shows in manifold characters the process by which the soul is to free itself of its weak, inadequate, sinful phases. We find here, even the unregenerate—Cloten and his mother, who persist in evil and perish, though they, too, have the same chance as the rest. They cannot be mediated, they make the Inferno in this comedy, which, in certain respects, is Dantean. But the chief realm here is the Purgatory, which shows the erring man in the process of regeneration. Many forms he takes, from the demon Iachimo, through Posthumus, the King, Belarius; up to

even the good ones, Imogen and Pisanio; all are going through the purgatorial discipline. Shakespeare's Purgatory, however, includes the guiltless and the guilty, in this being different from Dante's; the sinless have to suffer for and through the sinful, thereby attaining to completeness and passing from mere innocence to positive goodness. But we have also a touch of the primitive Pardise in the two youths and their mountain home. Theirs is the state of first innocence, without knowledge, but they thirst for experience, and quit their paradisaical abode, having the old Adam in them still. Thus the play completes the cycle of the human, if not of the divine, comedy.

TEMPEST.

The first question with the reader of this play, is, Does he see Ariel? Caliban is visible enough; he is an object of sense, and is himself a sensuous being. But Ariel is "subject to no sight but mine and thine, invisible to every eye-ball else."

Tempest has always had and always will have a charm for the speculative mind; it demands interpretation, and can be explained into many forms of religion and philosophy. The Poet clearly enters the realm of conscious symbolism, in the present drama, and the reader must follow him or remain outside. It is a product in which we must behold, not anything we please, but our own deepest thought, though this may assume very different shapes in the minds of different persons. *Tempest* is a thought-compeller, if there ever was one; from this fact it results that the best expositions of it are philosophic or even religious, not literary or dramatic; as a drama, indeed, it cannot be acted in any adequate sense. But just here lies the danger. Interpretation, not held down to forms of the Real World, may become wildly extravagant;

the result is, *Tempest* has begotten some of the craziest views concerning Shakespeare.

On the whole Prospero is the completest character of the great delineator; he is universality itself, though combined with human, finite elements, over which he becomes, however, the master at last. This is his magical power, for he is represented as a magician, in fact, the greatest of all possible magicians. The Poet's tragic characters we saw struggling with their limits and overwhelmed in them; his mediated characters rise out of weakness, folly, finitude through a severe course of discipline. The Shakespearian man is a struggle between Finite and Infinite; but Prospero, while enduring and portraying such a struggle, is always above it, and knows that he is above it. Hamlet is doubtless more fully delineated; still in Prospero the Poet is all his characters and himself too. In other comedies Shakespeare has placed before us in many phases the woman-mediator; now he depicts the man-mediator, the one who sees through all collisions by his intelligence, and reconciles them, and still further, casts the whole process thereof into the image of Art.

The great and striking peculiarity of the action of this play is that it lies wholly in the Ideal World. It differs, therefore, from every other drama of Shakespeare in the character of its mediation. The Poet, in most of his works, por-

trays the Real World, and exhibits man as acting from clear, conscious motives, and not from supernatural influences. But here he completely reverses his procedure; from beginning to end, the chief instrumentalities of the poem are external in form, at least; its conflicts and solutions are brought about by powers seemingly beyond human might and intelligence. It should, however, be placed in the ideal class of mediated dramas, in all of which some phase of the Ideal World is the great mediating principle. But in these plays the Real World is also present, and there is in the course of the action a transition from the one to the other. Hence, too, there follows a change of place and time, and the so-called unities must be violated. But *Tempest* has not this double element — with the first scene we are in the magic realm of the island and its influences, which do not cease till the last line of the play. Hence it is more unique, more homogeneous, than any of the dramas belonging to this class; the unities of time and place can be observed, and the action lies wholly in the Ideal World. It is, therefore, the culmination, and, it may be added, the perfection, of this dramatic form.

It is now the duty of the interpreter to translate the poetic shapes and transformations — in which this play abounds above all others — into Thought. Thus he gives the same meaning, the

same content, which is found in the play; but he addresses the Reason and Understanding, instead of the Imagination. What Shakespeare expresses in poetry he must express in prose, and, moreover, must supply the logical *nexus* which the imaginative form cannot give. Hence, above all things, let him not fall into the error of merely substituting one poetical shape for another, whereby nothing is explained, and confusion is only increased. If Prospero is called Shakespeare, or by any other name, what is gained by the change? The same difficulties remain for Thought as before. The task is not easy, nor is it likely to give satisfaction at first to the reader; for these beautiful ideal shapes must vanish before our eyes and be transformed into the dry, abstract forms of prose. The contrast is striking, to some perhaps repulsive; but, if we wish to comprehend, and not merely to enjoy, Shakespeare, there is no alternative.

Let us bring before our minds the three leading facts of the play and grasp them in their true relation. First, Alonso and his company represent the Real World; but they have arrived at a magic isle, where they are under the sway of unknown external agencies. Within certain limits they still can act through themselves, but their chief movements are determined from without by the Ideal World—Ariel and his spirits, who constitute the second element. Thus the fact is

indicated that the Ideal or Supernatural World is master of the Real or Natural World. Thirdly, there is Prospero, a being who commands both, yet partakes of both, these principles — the real and the ideal, the natural and the supernatural; he is connected by nationality, and even by family, with those in the ship, but is at the same time the lord of Ariel and of the Spirit World, who fulfill his behests with implicit obedience.

Here appears the twofold nature of Prospero, which is the pivotal point of the drama, and, hence, its comprehension must be our first object. He controls the elements, he is gifted with foresight, he possesses absolute power — yet in his weakness has been expelled from his throne and country. To be sure, there is the difference of time between his expulsion and his present greatness, but this cannot adequately account for the contradiction. Let us try to explain these two elements of his character, as they have been elaborated fully by the Poet in the course of the drama. In the first place, Prospero must manifest the finite side of his nature. As an individual, he comes in contact with other individuals and things — in general, with the realm of finitude in which he himself is finite. Limitation begets struggle; thus arise the collisions of life. Many men, it seems, have been his superiors in these struggles; his brother is a much more practical man — has dethroned him and driven him off.

Such is Prospero the individual, and as such he collides with various forms of finite existence. He has been hitherto defeated in these conflicts. This is the one element. But Prospero also possesses the side of universality; he is spirit, intelligence — which comprehends, solves, and portrays all the collisions of the finite world. It is only through long discipline and devoted study that he has attained this power. His pursuit of knowledge, moreover, cost him his dukedom, and was the source of his chief conflict — that with his brother. He thus stands for spirit in its highest potence — the Universal — but he is at the same time the Individual, and accordingly, is exposed to the realm of finite relation and struggle, which, however, his reason must bring into an harmonious unity.

But his spiritual activity is mostly confined to a special form of intelligence — that form which embodies its contents in pictures and symbols, namely, the creative Imagination. Prospero does not employ pure thought, but poetic shapes and images. He must, therefore, be the Poet, who has within him the world in ideal forms, and, in this way, possesses over it an absolute power. He calls up from the vasty deep whatever shapes he wishes in order to execute his purposes and perform his commands. Thus he solves all the contradictions in which he, as an individual, is involved, and subdues all the in-

fluences which come within his magic circle. For he is this universal power; and in the sphere of ideality — in the realm of spirit — nothing can resist him. The revenge of Prospero is, therefore, ideal, for certainly Shakespeare would never have taken such instrumentalities as these spirits to portray a real revenge merely. Moreover, the play must end in reconciliation — the harmony of the Individual with the Universal; for spirit possesses just this power over the conflicts of finite existence — it must show itself to be master.

In this way we can account for the commanding position of Prospero in the drama. He is the grand central figure — the absolute power who controls ultimateiy the movements of every person, and from whom all the action proceeds. The form of mediation is, therefore, external; but, truly considered, Prospero is no *deus ex machina* — no merely external divinity brought in to cut the knot that cannot be untied. The interpretation must always exhibit him inside of the action; the clew is his double nature. As an individual, he is engaged in conflict; but then he steps back, beholds and portrays that conflict, and solves it through spirit in the form of Imagination. He is, therefore, the mediator of his own collisions; thus externality falls away. The solution is, accordingly, not external, which would be the case if the absolute power simply

stood outside of the action and commanded everything to take place. It is the special duty of the critic to explain these external mediations — of which the play is full — into a clear, spiritual purpose and meaning.

Prospero is, therefore, the mighty spirit standing behind and portraying the collisions of his own individual life, and of finite existence generally. But this is not enough to account for his activity. He could easily put his experiences and struggles into a dramatic form without invoking the aid of the Supernatural World. The necessity of this element must be seen. If he would give a complete picture of his own activity, he must portray not only the above-mentioned conflicts, but also portray himself as portraying them. In other words, he must depict himself as Poet — as Universal; he must give an account of his own process, and that account must also be in a poetic form. This will push the Imagination to the very verge of its powers, for thus it must do what self-conscious thought alone can usually do, namely, it must comprehend and portray itself. Hence comes the external form representing it as the absolute master over its materials.

The drama thus attempts to account for itself in a drama — in its own form. Having swept over the whole field of life and portrayed every species of collision, it now comes to grasp itself — its own process. Thus it becomes truly univer-

sal — a complete totality; for it takes in the World and itself too. This play is often considered Shakespeare's last, and it may be regarded as a final summing up of his activity — or, indeed, that of any great poet. In his other works he has portrayed the manifold variety of collisions, but now he portrays them being portrayed. Here he reaches, if he does not transgress, the limit of dramatic representation, though not of poetic conception; he can use only strange, symbolical shapes to indicate his meaning — shapes quite unmanageable for mere ocular, theatrical effect.

It is now time to see the poem springing from the twofold nature of Prospero. As individual, we must expect to behold him involved in some of the ordinary dramatic collisions. An analysis will reveal three of them, all in regular gradation of importance; these are the three threads of the play. First, there arises the collision in the Family — Prospero, the father, on the one hand, against the lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda, on the other. The old conflict is depicted — the choice of the daughter is opposed by the will of the parent. Secondly, there is portrayed the collision in the State — Prospero, the rightful ruler of Milan, against the usurper, Antonio, supported by the King of Naples, both of whom with followers are on board the newly-arrived ship. Thirdly, there is the more general collision, which may be stated to be between

Rationality and Sensuality — the former represented by Prospero and Ariel, the latter by Caliban, with Trinculo and Stephano. The Sensual rises up against the Rational in all its forms — in Institutions and even in Art, as well as in Intelligence. Such is the material for Imagination to work upon.

But the other side must not be forgotten. The Imagination, at the same time, portrays itself elaboratiug this content. The Poet is not only going to make the drama, but is going to show himself making it. This gives the ideal element, representing Prospero as having the absolute power of mediating all the collisions of his individual existence. Moreover, the above-mentioned collisions of this drama are the general collisions of all dramas; the Poet thus depicts himself grasping and arranging the pure forms of his own poetic art.

The reader is now prepared to summon before his mind the total organization of the play, as the frame-work upon which all the details may be placed in a luminous, as well as in an exhaustive, order. There are three movements, which, however, must not be considered as absolutely separate, but as fused together into one action. The first movement is introductory; it shows Prospero's relation to his daughter; it also unfolds the political wrong done to Prospero, who has been expelled from his kingdom by men here

present in the wrecked ship; this wrong occurred before the time of the drama, but is told in it. These enemies of Prospero have now come into his power by means of the Spirit World of his island, whose double character is typified in its two representatives — Ariel and Caliban. So there is here a real and an ideal element, one supreme over the other. The second movement has as its three threads the triple collision with the individual Prospero, which threads are represented by the lovers, the usurping brother, and Caliban, respectively. All have punishment inflicted upon them by the spiritual agencies of Prospero, who is thus the Poet dispensing poetic retribution. Here is a real world of conflict, over which hovers an ideal world of justice, reflecting itself in the stainless mirror of the Imagination. The third movement is the Reconciliation, also mediated by the Spirit World; the parent withdraws his obstacle, the guilty repent, the injured forgive, and thus discordant strife turns to the sweetest harmony. The conflicts of the individual Prospero are all solved; Family, State, even Sensuality, are no longer in struggle with him; that real life of his, so turbid and troubled, has elevated itself into the clear, placid Ideal, wherein all its Past lies beautifully imaged. Ariel, thy work is now done; hence, "to the elements!"

Such is the happy mediation of the play, which is tinged at times with deep seriousness. It is, in-

timately connected by its time and its coloring with that class of Shakespeare's plays in which wrong is atoned for by repentance, and the criminal escapes by "heart's sorrow" the punishment of death — the legitimate consequence of his deed. It is such a drama, but it is more; it is such a drama with the dramatist taken into the action; the poetic power which makes the play is a character of the play.

I.

It remains for us to take the poem in hand and to see whether these things, with a reasonable interpretation, can be found in it, or are the absurd subtleties of the expositor's fancy. The first movement is explanatory; it gives the primal act of wrong and the transition out of the Real World; not in a dramatic form, but by way of retrospective narration. But it has the main facts of the action and these we shall seek to distinguish.

First comes the tempest from which probably the drama takes its name; here we see terrors of shipwreck intermingled with Shakespearian humor, which gives the relief along with the crushing anxiety of such a scene. The effect of this tempest is to divide the ship's company into three parts, corresponding to the three threads above mentioned, and to scatter them into differ-

ent portions of the island. But the peculiarity of this tempest is, as we learn in the next scene, that Prospero has brought it about through Ariel. It is, therefore, not a tempest which has taken place through natural causes; it is, evidently, a poetical tempest. For certainly Shakespeare would not have us believe that storms are produced by spirits ordinarily; but this one certainly is. What, then, does the author mean? for his procedure here assuredly needs explanation. I think he tells us — in saying that Ariel, by command of Prospero, caused the tempest and dispersed the company — that tempests are called up by the Poet; that they are a poetical instrument employed to bring about a separation of parties, and to scatter them into different places as here. We are, therefore, led to inquire whether Shakespeare himself has ever employed this means in any of his dramas. Accordingly, we find the same instrumentality in *Twelfth Night* and *Comedy of Errors*, used for the same purpose. The tempest is an artifice of the Poet for scattering, or possibly uniting, his characters in an external manner. Here, then, in the very first scene, the Poet is portraying his own process.

The second scene of the First Act, which now follows, is the most important one in the play, for it gives the key to the action. A careful analysis of all its elements will, therefore, be necessary. First appears before us the Family,

the primary relation of man — here that of father and daughter, the latter of whom speaks in the first line of her parent's Art, which she herself, being purely individual, does not possess, but still knows of. For their relation is a natural one — not spiritual — that between parent and child. Miranda is seized just at the point of budding womanhood; in her the consciousness of sex is dawning upon virgin innocence. She is excited by sympathy for the sufferers, when the father assures her that no one has perished — in fact, no one can perish — in the vessel. Again we ask the question: Why this confidence of Prospero that all will be saved? The prevision in his art, which he speaks of, is that of the Poet, who ordains beforehand, by the strictest necessity, the course of the action and the fate of the characters, and knows what kind of a drama he is going to write. He lays down his magic mantle — that is, he assumes the individual relation to his daughter — and then begins to give an account of his life and conflicts as an individual. Here, then, he relates his main collision: a brother, with the aid of a foreign king, has driven him from his dukedom.

Prospero does not conceal the cause of his banishment. He neglected the Practical for the Theoretical; he handed over the administration of his government to others, and devoted his time to his books, his study, his Art. The logic of

this transition is evident. He cuts loose from the Real World, and the Real World retorts by cutting loose from him — drives him off. Where, now, is he? Having severed all his individual relations, he is manifestly left just in his ideal realm. But there is one tie which he cannot break — he is a father. This bond still unites him to finite existence: or, if he must depart for the ideal world, the daughter must go along. The two, therefore, are put into a vessel together, and reach the magic island. Prospero intimates that it was this relation which saved him; otherwise, he would have given that final stroke which dissolves all individual relations:

Mirando. — Alack, what trouble was I then to you!
Prospero. — O, a cherubim
Thou wast, that didst preserve me. Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from Heaven.

Moreover, he takes his books with him, "Volumes which I prize above my dukedom." This is indeed just the trouble in his case. Father and daughter are committed to wind and wave, and are brought ashore "by Providence divine," who also takes a hand in the matter. In the divine order, then, this whole action is placed; above Prospero is a still higher Prospero duly recognized here. But the great transition is made from the Real to the Ideal or Magic World; there is the passage from civilized life to an unculti-

vated spirit-island; a wrong has been done in the institutional realm, which throws the man back quite to Nature's beginning. At this point we behold the main joint of the dramatic structure; the present play clearly belongs to the class of the Poet's dramas which have an ideal (or idyllic) mediation. But the transition in *Tempest* seems deeper and broader than any heretofore; it is a parting from the whole finite world of conflict, of practical activity, of individual relation; all is snapped off but the one little thread which connects him with his daughter. Thus Prospero is landed in his magic island, which is the scenic setting of his Ideal World.

It is furthermore to be noticed that both parties have their just and their unjust element. Prospero is wronged — he is dispossessed of his recognized rights by violence; yet he himself is not without guilt. The Real World has a claim upon him as ruler, which claim he has totally ignored. We can foreshadow that the play must result in reconciliation, and not in the death of the wrongdoers. Prospero, as Poet, must see both sides and represent them in their truth, and cannot avenge himself as an individual. This drama, therefore, will not have a tragic termination; it must, as previously stated, end in the repentance of the one party and forgiveness of the other.

Prospero has thus brought the story of his life down to the tempest, embracing the conflicts of

his individual existence. His enemies, having been wrecked in the ship, are scattered over the island and are in his power. Now the ideal powers enter into the action of the drama. But, behold! Miranda sleeps in the presence of the Spirit World; she is mortal — individual merely; she possesses not the vision and faculty divine. It is no wonder that she cannot choose but sleep in the invisible realm, for eyes cannot help her. But who appears here in this Spirit World? An airy being called Ariel, who seems not to be restrained by any bonds of Space and Time; who flies abroad and performs on land and sea the behests of his master. He was the cause of the shipwreck, we now learn, and he gives a vivid account of his feats in that work. Again an explanation is demanded, and we feel compelled to say that Ariel is that element of Prospero before designated as Imagination, which thus gives an account to itself of its own deeds in a poetic form. For Ariel controls the elements — is sovereign over the powers of Nature, and directs them for the accomplishment of his master's purposes. In general, he seems to perform every essential mediation in the entire poem. What possesses this power but Imagination? Yet we must not press this meaning too closely, for Shakespeare does not allegorize, but always individualizes; he fills out his characters — whether they be natural or supernatural — to their sensu-

ous completeness. We shall observe that there are many sides given which are necessary to the image, but not necessary to the thought, even when the thought preponderates. It is impossible for these Shakespearian creations to be adequately interpreted as allegories, in which each particular stroke has its separate signification; the purport of the whole is what should be seized along with its general movement.

We find, too, that Ariel has scattered the ship's crew according to order: "As thou badst me, in troops I have dispersed them about the isle." Ferdinand is landed by himself, the King and his company are in another part of the island. Stepheno and Trinculo in still another; the mariners are kept in the one ship while the rest of the fleet is sent home. In other words Ariel has organized this poem by command of Prospero and he tells, too, how he has done it.

But this dainty spirit, Ariel, is not wholly satisfied with his lot; he has that absolute aspiration of Intelligence—nay of Nature herself—namely, the aspiration for freedom. What is meant here by freedom? Merely to get rid of labor and then be idle? We think not; it is rather to accomplish the work in hand — to embody itself in some grand result; this is the toil of Spirit, of the Imagination. The freedom is the realization of its end, when the Imagination has clothed itself in an adequate form, which process, it may

be added, can be completed only at the close of the poem; then Ariel is dismissed to the elements. But he never could have been free unless he realized aspiration in an objective form. It will thus be seen that Ariel quite corresponds to that element of Prospero's character which was called Spirit — Intelligence — or the Universal as opposed to the Individual.

But the Poet Prospero proceeds further; he gives a history of Ariel. Once the spirit was the slave of the hag, Syeorax, who imprisoned him in a cloven pine because he would not perform "her earthly and abhorred commands." Here is presented the conflict which is as old as man — spirit against flesh, Reason against Appetite. Moreover, we see its earliest form; spirit is overcome and is subordinate to flesh — to sense. Hence the groans of Ariel from his prison-house, till at length Prospero comes to the island and frees him. Now he is the servant of Prospero, and transforms himself into every kind of shape which Prospero commands, in order to perform the various requirements of the play. He is at once sent off on an errand, the nature of which will soon be seen.

But when Ariel is gone, Miranda awakes; when he is present, she knows nothing of his presence. Manifestly she is no seeress of spirits. Prospero bids him: "Go make thyself like a nymph of the sea;" what can thus transform itself but

Imagination? In fact, it originally created the nymph in ancient Hellas, and still can assume their shape.

But what is this other shape which now rises upon our view — a monster, half man, half beast? He is the slave of Prospero, compelled to perform all the menial duties; in other words, his is the service of sense, a very necessary service; "we cannot miss him; he does make our fire, fetch in our wood," etc. His origin is not left in doubt — he is the son of Sycorax, and the heir of her character. Now we behold the opposite of Ariel in every way — Caliban is sense in all its forms, sensuality included. The peculiarity of their names, too, has been noticed by critics — with a slight transposition of letters, aerial becomes Ariel and cannibal becomes Caliban. But at present, under the rule of Prospero, sense is subordinated — is made to serve. Caliban is, therefore, the natural man whom Prospero has tried to educate, yet without altering his nature — who cannot be anything else but a slave. His knowledge is just sufficient to contest with Prospero the supremacy of the island. The rise of mankind from a state of nature, through language and education, is here indicated. The claim of Caliban to the sovereignty of the island by right of birth, against the right of intelligence, is a rather severe satire upon the principle of legitimacy, which may or may not have been intended

by Shakespeare. This antithesis between Prospero and Caliban should be observed, for it will constitute hereafter one of the collisions of the play.

There can hardly be a doubt concerning the main signification of these two figures of the drama. They are not portrayed as human in form, but as unnatural — or, if you please, supernatural; they exhibit one side, one element of man in its excess — Ariel is spirit without sense, Caliban is sense without spirit. They are, therefore, not human, for man includes both of them. Or, to revert to our abstract terms, we behold the two principles of Prospero's character — the Individual and Universal — objectified into independent forms by the Imagination of the Poet. Moreover, the inherent antithesis and hostility — in other words, the collision between these two principles — is also indicated. Prospero has, so to speak, separated himself into the two contradictory elements of his character, and given to each an adequate poetic form, and has also stated their contradiction. But he remains still master over both; they, though opposites, are still his servants — are still the instruments of the Poet who stands behind and directs their acts. Such is their fundamental representation in the play.

Another relation has been indicated in the poem with distinctness, namely, the relation of

the race of Caliban to Art. The foul witch, Sycorax, is the representative of the Ugly; she has even lost the human form — "with age and envy grown into a hoop," as if her head turned back into the earth again. She came from Argier, a land beyond the pale of culture, where spirit is still enslaved in the bonds of sense. But even there she could not live, on account of her negative character. She is put on the island, which remains a wild, untamed jungle, till the arrival of Prospero. So the Poet relieved his own dramatic Art of the witch's domination. The fate of Ariel has been mentioned, as well as his enfranchisement; but at present, under the rule of Prospero, nature is the servant of mind and is the bearer of its forms. Art is, therefore, possible, since the Sensuous is now controlled by the Spiritual; for Art is spirit expressed in a sensuous form.

Such is what we may call the first movement of the drama, which is narrated in the transition from Milan to Magic Island, and from the Past with its "dark backward and absym of Time" to the Present. The Poet has unfolded his personal relations and conflicts, has brought the story of his life down to the date of the action, and, chiefly, he has given us a peep into his Spirit World. The drama being now organized, unfolds in a regular, nay, systematic order.

II.

At this point we begin to be wholly occupied with the events taking place in the Island, these events being strung together on three lines, which we call the threads of the action. We shall observe Ariel carefully arranging these threads; after scattering the ship's company, he brings them together in conjunction with the inhabitants of the magic realm. Each thread we notice, is spun of one part ship and one part island; like finds like, and the two sets of correspondences run through the drama.

1. The first thread depicts the conflict in the Family. Our Ariel brings to the fair maiden a lover — the Poet never fails to do so. By his mysterious music Ferdinand, one of the ship's company, is led to Miranda. She thinks he is "a thing divine;" he thinks she is "the goddess" of the isle; thus each is to the other a divinity. Both fall in love at first sight; the natural unity of sex which calls forth the Family asserts itself on the spot. What else could happen? Ferdinand is alone in the world, Miranda is almost so — only her father is known to her. If man and woman belong together, certainly these two must feel their inseparableness, for there is nobody else to whom they can belong. It is the old climax — admiration, sympathy, love. "They

are both in either's powers;" each one finds his or her existence in the other.

But now appears the obstacle, for the course of true love can never run smooth — at least in a drama. The collision so frequently portrayed by Shakespeare again arises for a new treatment — that between the will of the parent and the choice of the daughter. Prospero opposes the match, charges Ferdinand with being a traitor and spy, and lays upon him the menial task of removing "some thousands of logs." This is the grand test to which the lover must be subjected by the Poet; he is to clear out this wild jungle and prepare it for the abode of culture. But Miranda is present with consolation, and even offers to assist in the labor; the young Prince bravely stands the trial — he is willing to undergo any toil for love's sake. The mutual declaration is made; then follows the mutual promise; the unity of feeling is complete. It is the essence of all love-stories.

The next time we meet with the father, in this connection, he has yielded his objections and sealed the pledge of the lovers with his consent. But all along we have been aware that his opposition was feigned — that he intended from the start to acquiesce in their marriage. In fact, he was the very person that brought it about. For his conduct he has adduced an external motive — "lest too light winning make the prize light." Still deeper is the design which he cherishes of

not only restoring his daughter to his own possessions, but also of making her queen of Naples. But the true internal necessity that his opposition should be feigned lies in his double nature. The Poet, who is none other than Prospero himself, interposes an obstacle — the refusal of the parent; which parent also is none other than Prospero himself. As father he stands in an individual relation to his daughter and comes into conflict with her; but as Poet he has brought about this conflict, and must solve it by giving validity to the right of choice. Such is the solution demanded by reason, and the one which Shakespeare universally gives to such a collision. Prospero knows, therefore, from the beginning, that his daughter will triumph — in fact, that he must make her triumph. The key to his conduct is that the father or individual and the Poet or Universal are one and the same man.

The right choice is, therefore, victorious over the will of the parent — a right which, though generally conceded at the present time, was once stoutly contested. Their love has been portrayed through its successive stages — the first predilection, the mutual declaration, the secret plight of troth, the consent of the father. But one thing more remains to be done — the ceremony with full and holy rite must be ministered. Upon this point Prospero lays the greatest stress; he speaks of it no less than three times in different places.

Without the formal solemnization of marriage their union cannot be ethical; it can bring forth only the most baleful weeds — hate, disdain, and discord. Lust is not love; indeed, it is the destruction of genuine love — a Caliban cannot truly enter the marriage relation. Moreover, the ceremony gives reality to the Family, which hitherto existed only in the subjective emotions of the parties. Religion (or the State in our time) comes in with its sanction and objectifies their union — makes it an institution in the world.

The marriage rite is, therefore, not a meaningless and unnecessary formality. Yet the origin and primal basis of the Family, is love, which the Poet has here portrayed in all its fervor. But left to itself simply, and ungoverned, it degenerates into lust. Our author would teach the lesson, if we understand him, that the ethical element and the emotional element must both be present in true affection; for the latter is destroyed by the Ethical alone, which is the case when the daughter is wholly obedient, and simply follows the will of the parent, and lets him choose for her. She thus cannot have much intensity in her love; but Miranda insists upon her affection, and the father at last yields. On the other hand, passion alone, without any ethical restraint, is even more fatal to love. Now, both these elements in their one-sidedness are represented by Shakespeare as antagonistic to the

unity of marriage. The truth is, the Emotional must be regulated, restrained, and made permanent by the Ethical; and the Ethical — which now takes the form of devotion to husband or wife, instead of obedience to parent — must be filled, vivified and intensified by the Emotional.

The marriage is followed by the masque, whose connection with the rest of the play is to be carefully studied, for it reveals more than anything else in the work the special character of Prospero as Poet. He calls up Ariel, who, it will be noticed, always appears when some important function of the drama is about to be performed. For what purpose is he now invoked? Mark the language of Prospero:

> — "I must
> Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple
> Some vanity of mine art; it is my promise,
> And they expect it from me."

At once there rise up before us the goddesses of the ancient Greek world — the poetical forms of all ages. These, then, are the spirits over which Prospero has power through his minister, Ariel; this, too, is his Art, which has brought forth all the other wonderful shapes of the poem. They are the beautiful forms of the Imagination, over which the Poet alone has control.

But let us notice the content of this little interlude; what will be its theme? Nothing but what has already taken place, only in a new form for

the lovers, who thus behold a representation of their own unity. The mainspring of the action is Juno, the spouse of the king of gods and men; therefore both the type and guardian of wife-hood, of chastity, of domestic life. She sends Iris, her many-colored messenger, for Ceres —

> "A contract of true love to celebrate,
> And some donation freely to estate
> On the blest lovers."

Such is the object of the visit of the two goddesses, which is still more precisely expressed by each in their songs. Juno particularly confers marriage-blessing and honor; Ceres physical comfort and prosperity. But mark that Venus and her blind boy are invited to stay away. They represent unholy lust; they plotted the means whereby dusky Dis, or devilish sensuality, carried off the innocent Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres, to the infernal regions. Thus the ethical element is again emphasized.

The relation of Prospero as parent — as individual — has now been portrayed, as well as the collision resulting therefrom and its solution. But he is also Poet, and, hence, must shadow forth the whole matter in the objective forms of poetry. It has already been pointed out that his feigning an objection to the love match resulted from his poetical prevision, and that

such an objection must finally be abandoned. Thus he has manifested in himself, and also depicted in the drama, the collision in the Family. But now, when consent has been given, and the hindrances smoothed over, a second time he appears as Poet, as if to leave no doubt of his nature in the mind of the reader or hearer. He steps back and reproduces, in a new poetical dress, the substance of the whole story before the lovers. This little play within the play thus has the effect of a double reflection of the action.

New beings appear in order to celebrate the contract of true love; Naiads, whose crown is chastity, and the sun-burnt sicklemen, whose trait is industry, join in a dance. But while Prospero is busily calling up these beautiful shapes from the Ideal Realm, he suddenly thinks of the conspiracy of Caliban. A new collision against himself, as an individual, has arisen, which demands immediate attention; the pressing fact rushes in upon him, and at once the poetical world vanishes. He is thus reminded that there are other things to be done, other struggles to pass through, and, finally, other collisions to be portrayed. But he is highly vexed at the interruption, and in his anger he utters the doom of the whole finite world, which sounds like the Last Judgment.

It is the most sublime passage of its length to be found in Shakespeare:

> "And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are make of and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

It is just this finite world which is so full of conflict and has caused him so much trouble. No wonder, then, that he almost curses it, and announces its utter perishability. But, though the life and works of man, and also the physical globe, are transitory, he is far from saying that mind — the Universal — will pass away. On the contrary, he now invokes the latter against destruction, for it is the master over finitude, over the negative powers of the world. Again our Ariel must appear — "come with a thought." Why? Only because he is thought. He answers: "Thy thoughts I cleave to." Why again? Because he cannot be separated from them. Thus Prospero and Ariel prepare for the conflict with Caliban, the account of which will be taken up in its proper connection.

2. Such is the first thread; the second is the collision in the State, which is the central thread of the play. Prospero, as rightful duke, comes

into conflict with a usurper — his own brother — who is supported by the King of Naples. Again we see that Prospero, in his individual relation, has fallen into strife and been overthrown. The history of his expulsion has already been given, and it must be noticed also that he relates the occurrence as something long antecedent to the play, and not embraced in its action, though its necessary presupposition. Such has been the wrong done to him. But now the universal element of his nature appears; his enemies are completely in his power; their punishment is to follow.

The tempest has conveniently scattered the ship's company into groups, in one of which are to be found all the offenders. But, first, there arises a conflict among themselves. There are three good characters — that is, those without guilt — Gonzalo, Adrian, and Francisco; opposed to these are the three wicked ones — Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian. The three good ones accept their misfortune and endure; also they try to comfort the others. But the three bad ones are full of satire and reproach; calamity only brings out their poisonous nature. The good Gonzalo can even dream of his perfect commonwealth, and the golden age in the desert isle. We must recollect that he was the man who was so kind to Prospero when the latter was banished and in a rotten boat cast upon the sea. At

present Antonio and Sebastian show their hatred, especially of the honest Gonzalo, by bitter ridicule, while Alonso is beginning to feel repentance for his deeds through the loss of his son. Yet a deeper retribution appears to be hanging over him. He has aided in dethroning a brother; a brother now threatens to dethrone him. The same man whom he unjustly assisted to a crown seems about to punish him. But his repentance will save him from final overthrow. So much for Alonso. Antonio is a much worse man. His conduct is consistent; he cannot stop in his negative career; he must continue dispossession and assailing the rights of others, for that is the logical necessity of his character. Having wrongfully expelled his nearest relative, he very naturally begins to plot against his greatest benefactor, the King of Naples. But the poetical mediator, Ariel, is again on hand to prevent the consummation of the plan; the Poet cannot let the matter end in that way. The victims wake with the music of Ariel; thus the design is frustrated.

The main poetical mediation is next to be accomplished — of course through Ariel. It is reconciliation by repentance. Repentance means that man has the power to make his wicked deed undone, as far as its influence upon his own mind is concerned. He can free himself from remorse — from the consequence of his own nega-

tive act. But the repentance must be complete; it includes the confession of the wrong, contrition adequate to its magnitude, and an entire restitution of its advantages. Spirit thus becomes again at peace with itself, and is relieved from its own destructive gnawings. This reconciliation is, therefore, a spiritual process, and, must be accomplished by the representative of spirit — Ariel.

The three criminals are in the presence of Prospero, who is invisible to them. They are, indeed, in the presence of their own wrong; retribution is at hand. Again we urge upon the reader to keep in mind the double nature of Prospero — as individual he has suffered these injuries, but as universal he is the Poet, who overcomes and protrays them, and indeed, punishes them with his poetical justice. He, therefore, puts into operation his Spirit World, whose main object is now to excite conscience — to rouse remorse. The men are hungry; a banquet is spread before them by several strange shapes who invite them to eat. It is the apparent smile of fortune upon the guilty. But when the King and the rest begin eating, the banquet vanishes. Thus it is indicated to them that a power beyond their consciousness is at work in the isle. Here it is — Ariel, who now drops his invisible form and appears to them like a harpy, the symbol of vengeance. He calls himself Destiny, or a minister

of Fate; his function is retribution. He comes to avenge the wrong done to Prospero:

> —"For which foul deed
> The powers delaying, not forgetting, have
> Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all creatures,
> Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,
> They have bereft; and do pronounce by me
> Lingering perdition — worse than any death."

So far it resembles that external power which the Greeks called Fate, and which at last came to control Jupiter himself.

But is there no salvation from the wicked deed? Hear Ariel again:

> —"Whose [the powers'] wraths to guard you from —
> Which here in this most desolate isle else falls
> Upon your heads — is nothing but heart's sorrow,
> And a clear life ensuing."

What a wonderful change! Ariel is no longer the representative of Grecian Fate, but is a preacher of Christian Gospel, whose doctrine is repentance — "heart's sorrow and a clear life ensuing." Man can now avoid the retribution of ancient destiny. Though Ariel has assumed this shape to the wicked three, yet the reader has all along known that it was merely a poetical form; that Ariel, in reality, is not a minister of Fate, but of freedom — a minister of Prospero, of spirit, of self-determination.

Hitherto we have seen Ariel appearing at every

critical conjuncture; he evidently knows each turning-point of the drama, and flashes out of the air instantly. Morever we have noticed the delightful interplay between Ariel and Prospero; the latter is charmed and flatters his spirit: "Bravely the figure of this harpy thou hast performed, my Ariel." It is the poet caressing his genius, and the latter responds to his love:

> *Ariel.* Do you love me, master? No?
> *Prospero.* Dearly, my delicate Ariel.

Well may the magician take pleasure in that wonderful spirit of his, who calls up such a world of beautiful shapes. Who can doubt that the Poet's enjoyment of his own creative energy is greater than that of any of his readers! It is the highest ecstasy of the human soul, in which the maker himself is put under the charm of his own creatures.

In the speech of Ariel to the "three men of sin" we can hear the voice of Shakespeare's poetic creed, especially as it is revealed in his later comedies. What is called destiny by men, "hath to instrument this lower world," and it has just "caused the never-surfeited sea to belch you up," the retributive powers can incense "the seas and shores, yea, all creatures" to requite the guilty act which has been done to Prospero and his innocent child. The belief is here expressed that the wrong once done in the world rouses the

whole order of nature to requite it and thus to get rid of it. For Nature herself feels the deed of guilt and seeks to expel it. Yet this is really Providence, who thus employs the great natural forces to bring forth order and justice, when the State or the institution has failed. Still the man can be saved from even these tremendous forces of Nature by an inner change; the deepest voice heard here is the mediatorial voice of repentance. The guilty soul will, then, be received once more into the divine order; indeed all this penalty has been, in its character, remedial; it has been sent to bring back the wanderer. Our providential Prospero has really had this purpose from the beginning.

Thus the three "men of sin" are brought to a consciousness of their crimes; they wax desperate at their guilt, which now reacts negatively upon their minds — "like poison, 'gins to bite the spirits." The innocent three weep over them, "brimful of sorrow and dismay." When the guilty have sufficiently atoned for the wrongs which they have committed, Prospero is ready to grant forgiveness; he declares that their repentance is "the sole drift of his purpose." The frenzy begins to subside after they enter his charmed circle; gradually reason returns, and Prospero, though invisible, tells to their innermost conscience the nature of their crimes and the consequent punishment. All is now plain to

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represented the natural man — man still immersed in his senses, and not yet elevated to a rational existence. He, therefore, must collide with the world of spirit represented by Prospero, for the reason that it necessarily subordinates him, and even reduces him to a slave. Such is the function of the senses — they are the pack-horses of intelligence; and the physical man, even if he constitutes the whole man, must follow the same law. Caliban is, accordingly, a menial of the lowest type, and is set to performing the most degrading services for Prospero. His ignorance and utter slavishness to the External are manifest from the fact that he cannot comprehend the commonest functions of Spirit or of Nature; he regards them as ghosts and goblins sent to torment him.

But Caliban has not always been in this condition of servitude. Prospero found him on the island, treated him with the greatest kindness, taught him to speak, and admitted him to his own family. The result was an attempt to violate the honor of his daughter. Prospero has now learned the very important distinction that an animal is an animal and must be subordinated — at least not admitted to the social relation which he will inevitably destroy. There is a difference between a man and a brute, notwithstanding our so-called humanitarians. By ignoring this difference we do not elevate the lower, but inevitably

degrade the higher. "I had peopled else this isle with Calibans," is the threat of the beast. Thus passes away the fantastic humanity of Prospero when it comes in contact with the reality.

Such is the man-monster in the family relation; the author is now going to bring him before us in his political, and also in his religious, character. All the world can study the picture with profit at the present time. We have both Caliban and Prospero in our midst. Our philanthropic Prosperos have forgotten the fact that the Sensual must be subordinated to the Rational; the distinction between humanity and animality is not to be altogether ignored. The institutions of Reason cannot be subjected to the rule of Appetite, against which they were reared as barriers. Yes, the philanthropic Prospero is at last forced to the exclamation—

> "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
> Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost."

Such an insight will hereafter lead to the true solution of the Caliban-problem, for mark! this conflict, too, must be harmonized to the peace and interest of both sides.

Caliban, the natural man, is, therefore, in a deadly struggle with Prospero, the rational ruler. The ship also — or the Real World, if you please — has its sensual element as well as the

island — the Ideal World. The next thing, therefore, is the appearance of the representatives of this element — Trinculo and Stephano. They, too, have been separated from the ship's company by the tempest, and, from a natural attraction of character, have been brought together with Caliban. Here we see the sensual trio made up from the ship and the Island. The two strangers bear the stamp of reality — are men of flesh and blood — belong, therefore, to prosaic life, and speak in prose; while Caliban, since he is a native of the island, is strictly a poetical being and speaks in verse. There is also a distinction between Trinculo and Stephano, the former being not so much jester as coward — craven in spirit — with the fear of the External always before his eyes; the latter is a drunkard, the slave of appetite, yet has a certain, swaggering courage. Caliban, to a degree represents both persons, for he is mortally afraid of the imaginary spirits, and he swallows with the wildest ecstacy the contents of Stephano's wine-bottle.

Caliban's religion now appears also; he deifies the man who has gratified his appetite. Yet he himself remains a slave, and performs the same servile duties; he will kiss the foot of the new deity, dig pig-nuts for him, and carry all his wood — a task which is so irksome to do for Prospero. But he thinks he has obtained freedom, which to him means the reign of sensuality. The

mob seems to have broken loose from the strong hand of Prospero, lust and violence hope now to rule triumphant,and the ominous shout of drunken bestiality falls upon the ear: "Freedom, hey-day, hey-day, freedom! freedom, hey-day, hey-day, freedom!" It is curious that Shakespeare has endowed two beings so completely opposite as Ariel and Caliban with the same aspiration for freedom. He has thus indicated the two great definitions of that word which have always divided mankind. The one means unrestrained lust and anarchy, the other means liberty through institutions; the one is the realization of sensuality, the other is the realization of reason.

But the political side is still further developed. Such beings must have some conflict among themselves, which Ariel, our poetical mediator, does not fail to bring about. It only ends, however, in a beating given to the coward, Trinculo, who is innocent. But they have a common enemy — the present lord of the island — against whom they now conspire. It is King Stephano against King Prospero — the Sensual trying to dethrone the Rational. Stephano is not without his worshipers to-day. Hé represents the demagogue in the political world, who rules the rabble by gratifying their passions, himself being the incarnation of those passions. He thus unites the worst elements of society in a crusade against all established order and right. It will

be noticed also that not the least attraction for their "freedom" is the fair Miranda; both Family and State are to be subjected to unbridled lust. But their very nature is turned against them; their innate tendency to theft leads them aside from their purpose, and they are caught in their own toils. Still, they cannot reach Prospero; he is spirit, knows of their schemes, and sends upon them retribution in the shape of dogs and hounds — turns against them their own passions. The debauched set is no doubt "hunted soundly" by Prospero's goblins, but these goblins are also their own deeds; the external power of Ariel over them comes from their internal character.

We now behold Prospero victorious in all his conflicts, but his victory is peculiar; it consists in bringing home the guilty act to the doer. Well may he say; "At this hour lies at my mercy all mine enemies; shortly shall my labor my end." But not yet, though he has mastered the conflicts of his individual existence, there is yet a higher victory; he has to restore his enemies internally to reason and peace, and externally to their true place in the world. Justice he has inflicted, but justice is not the finality. Hence he says to Ariel: "For a little follow and do me service."

III.

The third movement is the Reconciliation. It is the Poet's Ariel — "my nobler reason" — who pleads for the distracted men of guilt. Prospero the individual yields to his Spirit, and lays aside his "fury:"

> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. Go, release them, Ariel.

The object of their punishment is their penitence, and through it their restoration. Mercy is the grand end, justice is remedial. Here we have another statement of the Poet's views of mediation. Prospero must forgive: "I do forgive thee, unnatural though thou art," he says to his brother. Then comes the inner restoration from the craziness of guilt, whereupon the outer restoration follows. The fact that these guilty men can feel remorse indicates their moral possibility, and foreshadows reconciliation. They go crazy through wickedness; well it is that they do; if they could not, they would indeed be helpless. As they are out of order internally, so they are out with the external order of things, both sides

through the great transformation are brought into harmony.

Even Caliban, of whom Prospero once quite despaired, is restored. He submits, manifests hearty repentance, and is cured of his delusive worship. "I'll be wise hereafter and seek for grace." He sees fully the nature of his former conduct:

> **What a thrice-double ass**
> **Was I, to take this drunkard for a God,**
> **And worship this dull fool.**

It would seem that these companions of Caliban also submit and look for pardon. In this magic isle Sense itself now yields a willing obedience to Reason, and thus becomes rational. Yes, even the "demi-devil" Caliban has in him, according to the optimistic creed of the Poet, the possibility of repentance and restoration.

This return and reconciliation of Caliban has also been brought about by Ariel, who thus has redeemed his inherited foe, Caliban. Yet the latter has also undergone an internal change through his own discipline. This double element we see in all of Ariel's actions. Whatever he does to people on the outside, they do also on the inside, through themselves. Ariel brings Ferdinand and Miranda together, yet they just as much bring themselves together. He speaks the voice of remorse to the three guilty men, yet

they also speak it to themselves. The external process of Ariel always corresponds with the internal process of the character; that is, Ariel is both in the man and in the world, like every true mythical creation. In most of his dramas the Poet unfolds simply the internal process of character; the lovers come together or collide through themselves; the guilty man is remorseful through his own conscience. *Tempest* is a double drama; it is a drama portraying the internal side of motive and character, like Shakespeare's other works; but it has behind itself in Ariel the spirit that brings everything to pass. It shows freedom, but also shows the pre-established order in which freedom moves and is possible; this order is that of Ariel or Prospero, the providential poet creating a world and its people.

Such is truly the positive function of Spirit — to bring all into harmony with itself, to make all reflect its own image. It may crush out with its power; but that is a negative result, and really no solution of a conflict. The highest attainment of intelligence may be expressed by just this word — reconciliation. The colliding individuals of the play are now united in spirit, and the harmony is perfect. They all have come to see the nature of their deeds. This is their common insight, and, therefore, their common concord; furthermore, they hasten to make their wicked deeds undone. Hence, when the criminals ar-

rive at this island, their destiny is to rise above their hitherto selfish, individual existence, and become reconciled with the Rational — the Universal.

Thus Prospero has changed all his enemies into an image of himself, and has made them participate, to a certain extent at least, in his own double character. Each person, through repentance, reflects Prospero, and places himself in unity with him. Nor must his double nature be considered anything strange or unknown; it is found more or less developed in every soul. As a moral, and particularly as a thinking, being, man must solve the conflicts of his individual existence. Indeed, the sum of all conflicts and the greatest of all contradictions is the one above mentioned, which in abstract language was called the contradiction between the Individual and Universal. Nay, the mightiest of men — for he was a man — whose spirit, however, raised him to be a divinity — Christ himself — was he not the embodiment of this contradiction? A celebrated sarcasm was once uttered concerning him: "Yes, Christ was able to save the whole world, but couldn't save himself." True, and his chief merit. Christ as individual was necessarily involved in the struggles of the world and perished; but as spirit he created it anew, and made it, so to speak, a different world, for its history since his time is the history of Christianity. So, too,

Prospero as an individual is overwhelmed with the collisions of life; but as spirit he has mastered and portrayed them, and even converted his enemies into his own image.

Prospero's career is now at an end; his work is done when the reconciliation is completed. He calls up once more the world of spirits, who have been his faithful instrumentalities, in order to bid them farewell forever. He abjures his rough magic — his Art; and soon he will break his staff — bury it in the earth — and drown his book. For the present, Ariel is retained, who brings together the entire company and restores even the ship. "Then to the elements;" the play ends — his poetical activity ceases.

The relation of the play to Shakespeare himself has frequently been discussed. Long ago a critic suggested that Prospero was Shakespeare. But the mistake has been that the play was supposed to represent Shakespeare's individual life. It might be taken as a portraiture of his poetic, universal life, or that of any great poet. Other mighty individuals have been suggested in place of Prospero, but in such cases there is merely the substitution of one name for another, whereby, however, nothing is explained. We can only say, as we began, Prospero is the Poet generically, who, in the first place, embodies the manifold themes of his Art in a dramatic form; and, in the second place, portrays himself in the act —

portrays himself performing his own process also in a dramatic form. The Drama can go no further; it has attained the universality of Thought.

Here also can be found the reason why it is impossible to give a theatrical representation of this play. What form shall we assign to Ariel and Caliban? A child for the one, and a low human shape for the other? Then we feel the impassible chasm which shuts off the Poet's creation from the stage. The pictorial art is equally impotent in reaching these conceptions? Why is this? Because Ariel and Caliban are thoughts more than images; they are not only far beyond the realm of sensuous representation, but even begin to transcend the realm of pure imagination. Hence we can read them and think them, but cannot imagine them with clearness; they lie too far in the sphere of unpicturable thought.

If we now put together the beginning and the end of the drama, we find that Prospero departs from the Real, passes through the Ideal, and returns to the Real. The middle stage is alone portrayed in the play. It would seem, therefore, that Prospero, being forced to abandon the practical world on account of his devotion to his books and his Art, solves in his theoretical domain all the contradictions of finite existence, and thus returns in triumph to the practical world. Thought, therefore, though at first antagonistic, finally restores action. Here we behold a phase

of the same mighty theme which is treated in *Hamlet* and in Goethe's *Faust*, notwithstanding the great difference of form between these poems. But, though this drama touches the Real World at both ends, its action lies wholly in the Ideal World.

Tempest stands very high in the list of Shakespeare's dramas; in some respects it is his supreme work. Its wonderful types, its perfect symmetrical structure, its bright poetic language — but, above all, its profound signification — must always make it a favorite among the thoughtful readers of the Poet. It has not been adequately appreciated in the past; it is that one of Shakespeare's plays which has yet to find in the future a full recognition of its meaning and importance. This noblest literary form, invented and perfected by Shakespeare, which no poet since his time has been able to reproduce — namely, mediation through an Ideal World — finds its culmination and perfection in *Tempest*. Moreover, it is a drama bursting the bounds of Dramatic Art and pointing beyond; theatrical representation utterly breaks down in an attempt to give the shapes here, for they refuse to be seen by the outer eye — only the inner eye can behold them. The old theater is gone, sunk beyond resurrection; its ghost may still linger, furnishing a place of amusement but no longer inhabiting the temple of culture. *Tempest* plainly

indicates the limits of the old Drama; it is also a prophecy of a new Dramatic Form — will the prophecy be fulfilled?

We notice in this play the tendency toward the spectacular — a tendency which the Poet shows in his later comedies. The work, too, has little passion; the author here rises into the clear undisturbed region of intellectual vision; the realm of tumultuous feeling lies far below him; the storms of the soul have cleared away after having borne him upward into the serene heaven of the seer. *Tempest* shows also the polymythical web of Shakespeare's imagination; it is classic; it is romantic; it is Greek in symmetry, moderation, form, if not in story; it is Gothic in spirit, in its magic, in its supernatural isle; it has a strand of the Italian novel, and a strong flavor of hearty English humor. In this multifabulous character, as well as in its passionless, spectacular symbolism, the poem is like the *Second Part of Faust*, also the last product of a great poet. Both Goethe and Shakespeare — though the latter much more rapidly than the former — seem to have developed in the same direction, and finally into the same poetic form. Above all things, this drama expresses the self-consciousness of the Poet in his Art; it is, indeed, self-consciousness put into a poetic dress. He has pushed his Art up to that height where he is able to take a look at himself, and to throw his own self-conscious activity

out of himself into a drama. One thinks he had already heard the charge that he did not know what he was about, that he was the wild barbarian of genius, the drunken savage of poesy. This drama is an answer — whether intended or not, may remain an open question — to the reproach of a want of self-mastery and of self-knowledge.

Shakespeare seems to have foreseen the difficulties in *Tempest* for the common understanding. Alonso exclaims: "These are not natural events," and the rest of the company echo him. They are as much puzzled as the reader of to-day and cry out with him: "Not natural, not probable." But listen to Prospero, and in him the Poet speaks:

> Do not infest your mind with beating on
> The strangeness of this business. At picked leisure
> Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you,
> Which to you shall seem probable, of every
> Those happened accidents.

So all this magic, this supernatural work of the play, these strange events, are probable, yea natural, when we once see into the business. Moreover, Prospero promises to "resolve you," as if his work needed some interpretation, needed the Poet himself to interpret it. But he does not fulfill his promise in his play, nor can he, without destroying its poetic form. Still we may

hear him out of his poem calling for his interpreter; manifold has been the response already, and will still continue to be for all time. Having answered the Poet's call according to ability, the interpreter, too, may now break his staff, and, what has become far more imperative, may just here drown his book.

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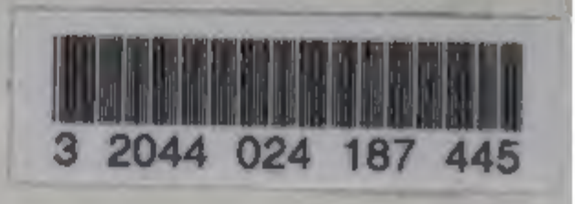
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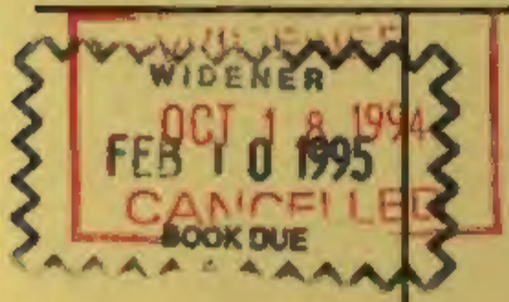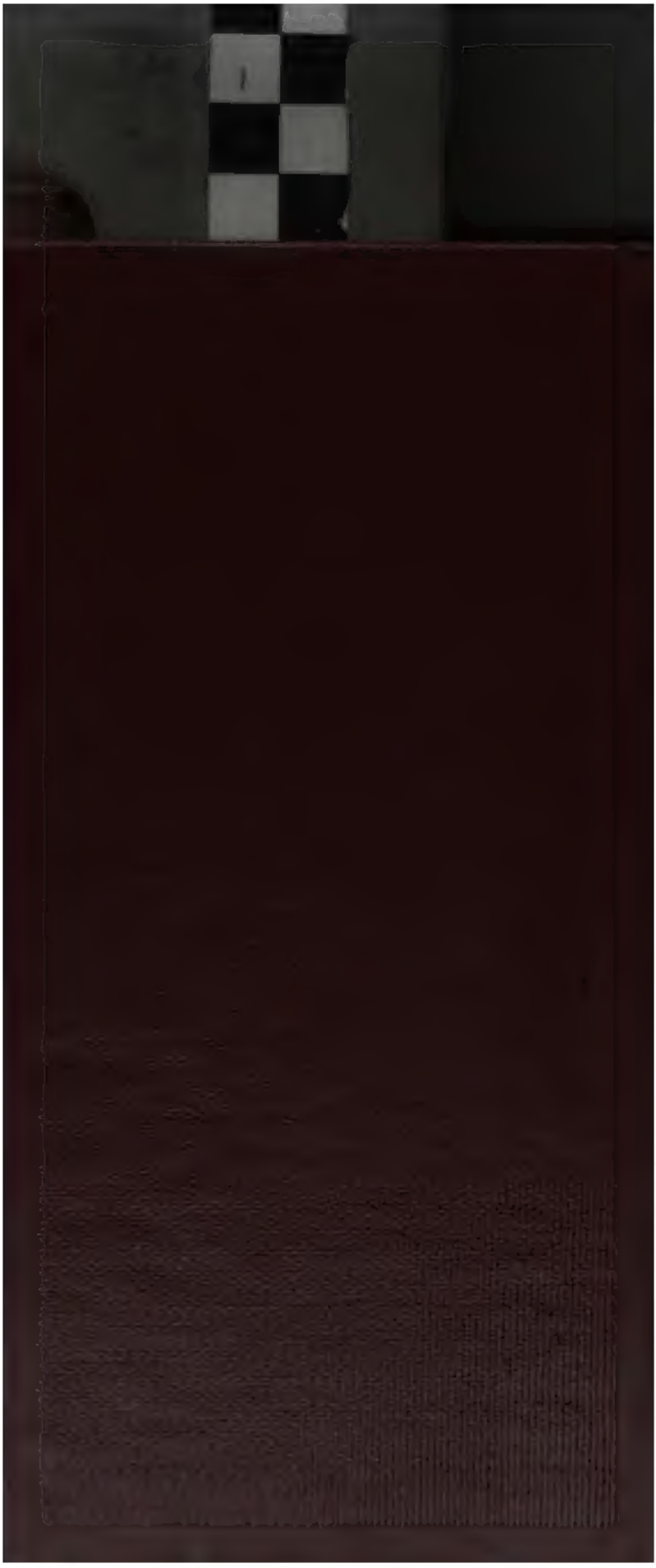
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